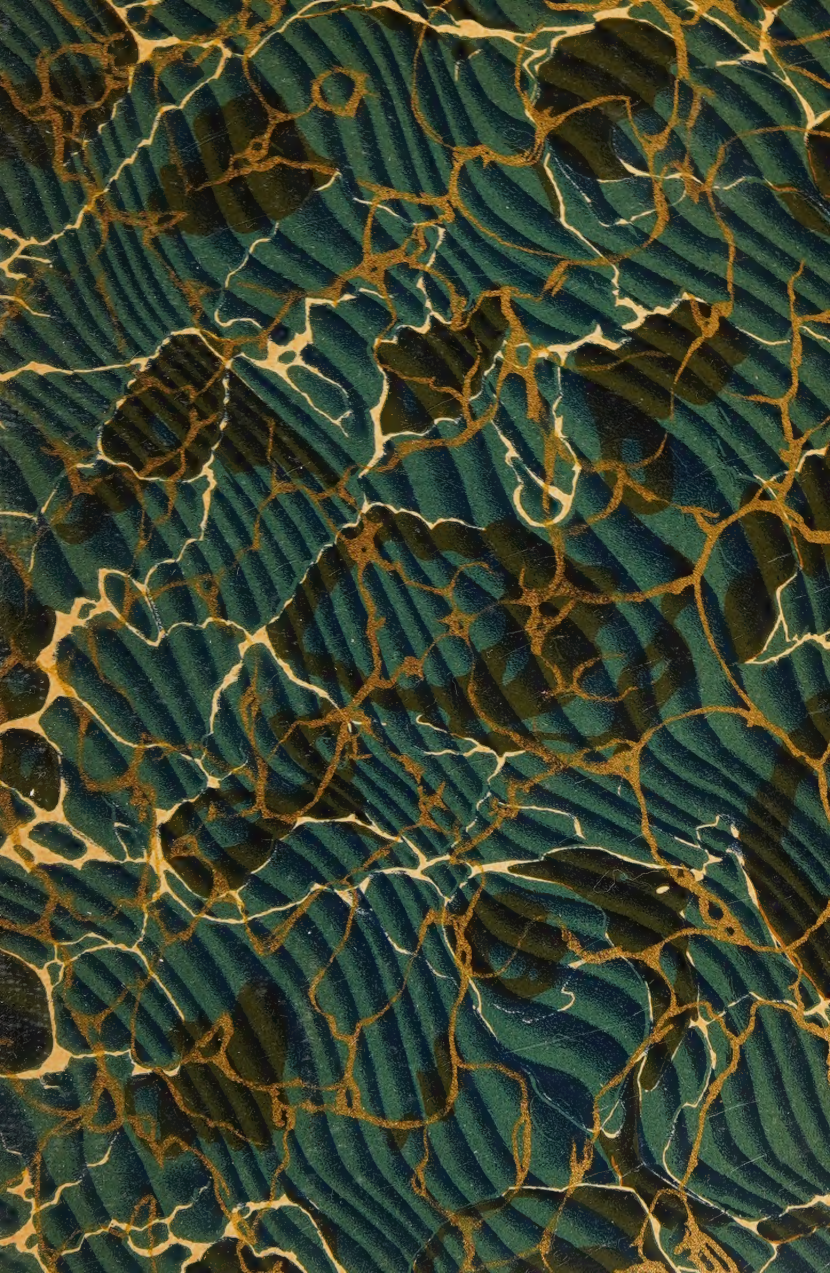

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THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE

An Historical Sketch of the Days of Napoleon

BY

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THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

BOOK I.

THE VISCOUNTESS BEAUHARNAIS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

"I WIN the battles, Josephine wins me the hearts." These words of Napoleon are the most beautiful epitaph of the Empress Josephine, the much-loved, the much-regretted, and the much-slandered one. Even while Napoleon won battles, while with lofty pride he placed his foot on the neck of the conquered, took away from princes their crowns, and from nations their liberty—while Europe trembling bowed before him, and despite her admiration cursed him—while hatred heaved up the hearts of all nations against him—even then none could refuse admiration to the tender, lovely woman who, with the gracious smile of goodness, walked at his side; none could refuse love to the wife of the conqueror, whose countenance of brass received light and lustre from the beautiful eyes of Josephine, as Memnon's statue from the rays of the sun.

She was not beautiful according to those high and exalted rules of beauty which we admire in the statues of the gods of old, but her whole being was surrounded with such a charm, goodness, and grace, that the rules of beauty were forgotten. Josephine's beauty was believed in, and the

heart was ravished by the spell of such a gracious, womanly apparition. Goethe's words, which the Princess Eleonore utters in reference to Antonio, were not applicable to Josephine:

"All the gods have with one consent brought gifts to his cradle, but, alas! the Graces have remained absent, and where the gifts of these lovely ones fail, though much was given and much received, yet on such a bosom is no resting-place."

No, the Graces were not absent from the cradle of Josephine; they, more than all the other gods, had brought their gifts to Josephine. They had encircled her with the girdle of gracefulness, they had imparted to her look, to her smile, to her figure, attraction and charm, and given her that beauty which is greater and more enduring than that of youth, namely loveliness, that only real beauty. Josephine possessed the beauty of grace, and this quality remained when youth, happiness, and grandeur, had deserted her. This beauty of grace struck the Emperor Alexander as he came to Malmaison to salute the dethroned empress. He had entered Paris in triumph, and laid his foot on the neck of him whom he once had called his friend, yet before the divorced wife of the dethroned emperor the czar, full of admiration and respect, bowed his head and made her homage as to a queen; for, though she was dethroned, on her head shone the crown in imperishable beauty and glory, the crown of loveliness, of faithfulness, and of womanhood.

She was not witty in the special sense of a so-called "witty woman." She composed no verses, she wrote no philosophical dissertations, she painted not, she was no politician, she was no practising artist, but she possessed the deep and fine intuition of all that which is beautiful and noble; she was the protectress of the arts and sciences. She knew that disciples were not wanting to the arts, but that often a Mæcenas is needed. She left it to her cousin, the

Countess Fanny Beauharnais, to be called an artist; hers was a loftier destiny, and she fulfilled that destiny through her whole life—she was a Mæcenas, the protectress of the arts and sciences.

As Hamlet says of his father, "He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again;" thus Josephine's fame consists not that she was a princess, an empress anointed by the hands of the pope himself, but that she was a noble and true wife, loving yet more than she was loved, entirely given up in unswerving loyalty to him who rejected her; languishing for very sorrow on account of his misfortune, and dying for very grief as vanished away the star of his happiness. Thousands in her place, rejected, forgotten, cast away, as she was—thousands would have rejoiced in the righteousness of the fate which struck and threw in the dust the man who, for earthly grandeur, had abandoned the beloved one and disowned her love. Josephine wept over him, lamented over his calamities, and had but a wish to be allowed to share them with him. Josephine died broken-hearted—the misfortunes of her beloved, who no more loved her, the misfortunes of Napoleon, broke her heart.

She was a woman, "take her for all in all"—a noble, a beautiful woman, a loving woman, and such as belongs to no peculiar class, to no peculiar nation, to no peculiar special history; she belongs to the world, to humanity, to universal history. In the presence of such an apparition all national hatred is silent, all differences of political opinion are silent. Like a great, powerful drama drawn from the universal history of man and represented before our eyes, so her life passes before us; and surprised, wondering, we gaze on, indifferent whether the heroine of such a tragedy be creole, French, or to what nation she may owe her birth. She belongs to the world, to history, and if we Germans have no love for the Emperor Napoleon, the tyrant of the world, the Cæsar

of brass who bowed the people down into the dust, and trod under foot their rights and liberties—if we Germans have no love for the conqueror Napoleon, because he won so many battles from us, yet this does not debar us from loving Josephine, who during her lifetime won hearts to Napoleon, and whose beautiful death for love's sake filled with tears the eyes of those whose lips knew but words of hatred and cursing against the emperor.

To write the life of Josephine does not mean to write the life of a Frenchwoman, the life of the wife of the man who brought over Germany so much adversity, shame, and suffering, but it means to write a woman's life which, as a fated tragedy or like a mighty picture, rises before our vision. It is to unfold a portion of the world's history before our eyes—and the world's history is there for our common instruction and progress, for our enlightenment and encouragement.

I am not afraid, therefore, of being accused of lacking patriotism, because I have undertaken to write the life of a woman who is not a German, who was the wife of Germany's greatest enemy and oppressor. It is, indeed, a portion of the universal drama which is unfolded in the life of this woman, and amid so much blood, so much dishonor, so many tears, so much humiliation, so much pride, arrogance, and treachery, of this renowned period of the world's history, shines forth the figure of Josephine as the bright star of womanhood, of love, of faithfulness—stars need no birthright, no nationality, they belong to all lands and nations.

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUNG MAID.

On the 23d of July, 1763, to the Chevalier Tascher de la Pagerie, ex-lieutenant of the royal troops, a resident of the insignificant spot of the Trois Islets, on the island of Martinique, was borne by his young, rich, and beautiful wife, a first child.

The loving parents, the relatives and friends had longed for this child, but now that it was come, they bade it welcome without joy, and even over the brow of the young father hung the shadow of a cloud as he received the intelligence of the birth of his child. For it was a girl, and not the wished-for boy who was to be the inheritor of the valuable family-plantation, and the inheritor also of the ancient and respectable name of Tascher de la Pagerie.

It was, however, useless to murmur against fate. What was irrevocable had to be accepted, and welcome made to the daughter, who, instead of the expected heir, would now lay claim to the rights of primogeniture. As an inheritance reserved for him who had not come, the daughter received the name which had been destined to the son. For two hundred years the name of Joseph had been given to the eldest son of the family of Tascher de la Pagerie, but now that there was none to whom the Chevalier, Ex-lieutenant Joseph de la Pagerie could leave his name as a legacy, the family had to be satisfied to give the name to his daughter, and consequently she received at baptism the name of Joseph Marie Rosa.

There was, however, one being who gladly and willingly forgave the fault of her birth, and who consecrated to the daughter the same love she would have offered to the son. This being was the mother of the little Joseph Marie Rosa.

"Contrary to all our wishes," writes she to her husband's sister, the beautiful Madame Renaudin, in Paris—"contrary to all our wishes, God has given me a daughter. My joy is not therefore diminished, for I look upon my child as a new bond which binds me still closer to your brother, my dear husband, and to you. Why should I have such a poor and meagre opinion of the female sex, that a daughter should not be welcomed by me? I am acquainted with many persons of our sex who concentrate in themselves as many good qualities as one would only with difficulty find in the other sex. Maternal love already blinds me and fosters in me the hope that my daughter may be like them, and if even I cannot enjoy this satisfaction, yet I am thankful to my child that by means of her existence I am gathering so much happiness."

Indeed, extraordinary joy, since the birth of the child, reigned in the house of M. Tascher de la Pagerie; joy reigned all over Martinique, for the long war between France and England was ended, and a few months before the birth of little Joseph Marie Rosa, the peace which secured to France the possession of her maritime colonies had been signed. Martinique, so often attacked, bombarded, besieged by English ships—Martinique was again the unconditional property of France, and on the birthday of the little Marie Joseph Rosa the French fleet entered into the harbor of Port Royal, landed a French garrison for the island, and brought a new governor in the person of the Marquis de Fénélon, the nephew of the famous Bishop de Fénélon.

Joyously and quietly passed away the first years of the life of the little Joseph, or little Josephine, as her kind parents called her. Only once, in the third year of her life, was Josephine's infancy troubled by a fright. A terrible hurricane, such as is known to exist only in the Antilles, broke over Martinique. The historians of that period know not how

to depict the awful and calamitous events of this hurricane, which, at the same time, seemed to shake the whole earth with its convulsions. In Naples, in Sicily, in the Molucca Islands, volcanoes broke out in fearful eruptions; for three days the earth trembled in Constantinople. But it was over Martinique that the hurricane raged in the most appalling manner. In less than four hours the howling northwest wind, accompanied by forked lightning, rolling thunder, heavy water-spouts, and tremendous earth-tremblings, had hurled down into fragments all the houses of the town, all the sugar-plantations, and all the negro cabins. Here and there the earth opened, flames darted out and spread round about a horrible vapor of sulphur, which suffocated human beings. Trees were uprooted, and the sugar and coffee plantations destroyed. The sea roared and upheaved, sprang from its bounds, and shivered as mere glass-work barks and even some of the larger ships lying in the harbor of Port Royal. Five hundred men perished, and a much larger number were severely wounded. Distress and poverty were the result of this astounding convulsion of nature.

The estate of M. Tascher de la Pagerie was made desolate. His residence, his sugar-plantations, were but a heap of ruins and rubbish, and as a gift of Providence he looked upon the one refuge left him in his sugar-refinery, which was miraculously spared by the hurricane. There M. Tascher saved himself, with Josephine and her younger sister, and there his wife bore him a third child. But Heaven even now did not fulfil the long-cherished wishes of the parents, for it was to a daughter that Madame de la Pagerie gave birth. The parents were, however, weary with murmuring against fate, which accomplished not their wish; and so to prove to fate that this daughter was welcome, they named the child born amid the horrors of this terrific hurricane, Désirée, the Desired.

Peaceful, happy years followed;—peaceful and happy,

in the midst of the family, passed on the years of Josephine's infancy. She had every thing which could be procured. Beloved by her parents, by her two sisters, worshipped by her servants and slaves, she lived amid a beautiful, splendid, and sublime nature, in the very midst of wealth and affluence. Her father, casting away all ambition, was satisfied to cultivate his wide and immense domains, and to remain among his one hundred and fifty slaves as master and ruler, to whom unconditional and cheerful obedience was rendered. Her mother sought and wished for no other happiness than the peaceful quietude of the household joys. Her husband, her children, her home, constituted the world where she breathed, in which alone centred her thoughts, her wishes, and her hopes. To mould her daughters into good housekeepers and wives, and if possible to secure for them in due time, by means of a brilliant and advantageous marriage, a happy future—this was the only ambition of this gentle and virtuous woman.

Above all things, it was necessary to procure to the daughters an education suited to the claims of high social position, and which would fit her daughters to act on the world's stage the part which their birth, their wealth, and beauty, reserved for them. The tender mother consented to part with her darling, with her eldest daughter; and Josephine, not yet twelve years old, was brought, for completing her education, to the convent of our Lady de la Providence in Port Royal. There she learned all which in the Antilles was considered necessary for the education of a lady of rank; there she obtained that light, superficial, rudimentary instruction, which was then thought sufficient for a woman; there she was taught to write her mother tongue with a certain fluency and without too many blunders; there she was instructed in the use of the needle, to execute artistic pieces of embroidery; there she learned something in arithmetic and in music; yea, so as to give to

the wealthy daughter of M. Tascher de la Pagerie a full and complete education, the pious sisters of the convent consented that twice a week a dancing-master should come to the convent to give to Josephine lessons in dancing, the favorite amusement of the creoles.*

These dancing-lessons completed the education of Josephine, and, barely fifteen years old, she returned to her parents and sisters as an accomplished young lady, to perform the honors of the house alongside of her mother, to learn from her to preside with grace and ease over a large mansion, and above all things to be a good mistress, a benefactress, and a protectress to her slaves. Under her mother's guidance, Josephine visited the negro cabins to minister unto the sick, to bring comfort and nourishment to the old and to the weak, to pray with the dying, to take under her loving guardianship the new-born babes of the negro women, to instruct in the catechism the grown-up children, to excite them to industry, to encourage them through kindness and friendliness, to protect them, and to be a mediator when for some offence they were condemned to severe punishment.

It was a wonderfully peaceful and beautiful life that of the young Josephine, amid a bountiful nature, in that soft, sunny clime which clothed her whole being with that tender, pleasing grace, that lovely quietude, that yielding complacency, and at the same time with that fiery, passionate nature of the creoles. Ordinarily dressed only with the "gaule," a wide, loose garment of white muslin, falling loosely about the waist, where no belt gathered its folds, the beautiful head wrapped up in the many-colored madras, which around the temples was folded up into graceful knots holding together her chestnut-brown hair—in this dress Josephine

* "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," par Joseph Aubenas, vol. i., p. 36.

would swing for hours in her hammock made of homespun silk and ornamented with borders of feathers from the variegated iridescent birds of Cayenne.

Round about her were her young female slaves, watching with their brilliant dark eyes their young mistress, ever ready to read every wish upon that dreamy, smiling countenance, and by their swarthy tinge heightening the soft, tender whiteness of her own complexion.

Then, wearied with the stillness and with her dreams, Josephine would spring up from the hammock, dart into the house with all the lightness of the gazelle to enliven the family with her own joyousness, her merry pleasantry, and accompanied by her guitar to sing unto them with her lovely youthful voice the songs of the creoles. As the glowing sun was at its setting, away she hastened with her slaves into the garden, directed their labors, and with her own hands tended her own cherished flowers, which commingled together in admirable admixture from all climes under the genial skies of the Antilles. In the evening, the family was gathered together in the light of the moon, which imparted to the nights the brightness of day and streamed upon them her soft blue rays, upon the fragrant terrace, in front of the house, where the faithful slaves carefully watched the little group close one to another and guarded their masters from the approaches of poisonous serpents, that insidious progeny of the night.

On Sundays, after Josephine had religiously and faithfully listened to an early mass, she gladly attended in the evening the "barraboula" of the negroes, dancing their African dances in the glare of torches and to the monotonous sound of the tam-tam.

On festivals, she assisted her mother to put all things in order, and to preside at the great banquets given to relatives and friends, who afterward were visited in their turn, and then the slaves carried their masters in hammocks, or else,

what was far more acceptable, the young maidens mounted small Spanish horses, full of courage and daring, and whose firm, quick step made a ride to Porto Rico simply a rushing gallop.

Amidst this dreamy, sunny, joyous existence of the young maiden gleamed one day, as a lightning-flash, a prophetic ray of Josephine's future greatness.

This happened one afternoon as she was walking alone and thoughtful through the plantation. A group of negresses, in the centre of which was an old and unknown woman, attracted her attention. Josephine approached. It was an old negro woman from a neighboring plantation, and she was telling the fortune of the young negro women of M. Tascher de la Pagerie. No sooner did the old woman cast her eyes on Josephine than she seemed to shrink into one mass, whilst an expression of horror and wonder stole over her face. She vehemently seized the hand of the young maiden, examined it carefully, and then lifted up her large, astonished eyes with a searching expression to the face of Josephine.

"You must see something very wonderful in my face and in my hand?" inquired Josephine, laughing.

"Yes, something very wonderful," repeated the negro woman, still intently staring at her.

"Is it a good or a bad fortune which awaits me?"

The old prophetess slowly shook her head.

"Who can tell," said she, gravely, "what is a good or a bad fortune for human beings? In your hand I see evil, but in your face happiness—great, lofty happiness."

"Well," cried out Josephine, laughing, "you are cautious, and your oracle is not very clear."

The old woman lifted up her eyes to heaven with a strange expression.

"I dare not," said she, "express myself more clearly."

"Speak on, whatever the result!" exclaimed Josephine,

whose curiosity was excited by the very diffidence of the fortune-teller. "Say what you see in my future life. I wish it, I order you to do so."

"Well, if you order it, I must obey," said she, with solemnity. "Listen, then. I read in your countenance that you are called to high destinies. You will soon be married. But your marriage will not be a happy one. You will soon be a young widow, and then—"

"Well, and then?" asked Josephine, passionately, as the old woman hesitated and remained silent.

"Well, and then you will be Queen of France—more than a queen!" shouted the prophetess, with a loud voice. "You will live glorious, brilliant days, but at the last misfortune will come and carry you to your grave in a day of rebellion."

Afraid of the pictures which her prophetic vision had contemplated in the future, the old hag forced her way through the circle of negro women around, and rushed away through the field as fast as her feet could bear her on.

Josephine, laughing, turned to her astonished women, who had followed with their eyes the flight of the prophetess, but who now directed their dark eyes with an expression of awe and bewilderment to their young mistress, of whom the fortune-teller had said she would one day be Queen of France. Josephine endeavored to overthrow the faith of her swarthy servants in the fortune-teller, and, by pointing to the ridiculous prophecy in reference to herself, and which predicted an impossible future, she tried to prove to them what a folly it was to rely on the words of those who made a profession of foretelling the future.

But against her will the prophetic words of the old woman echoed in the heart of the young maiden. She could not return home to her family and talk, laugh, and dance, as she had been accustomed to do with her sisters. Followed by her slaves, she went into her garden and sank

in a hammock, hung amid the gigantic leaves of a palm-tree, and, while the negro girls danced and sang round her, the young maid was dreaming about the future, and her beating heart asked if it were not possible that the prophecy of the negro woman might one day be realized.

She, the daughter of M. Tascher de la Pagerie—she a future "Queen of France! More than a queen!" Oh, it was mere folly to think on such things, and to busy herself with the ludicrous prophecies of the old woman.

And Josephine laughed at her own credulity, and the slaves sang and danced, and against her will the thoughts of the young maiden returned to the prophecy again and again.

What the old fortune-teller had said, was it so very ridiculous, so impossible? Could not that prophecy become a reality? Was it, then, the first time that a daughter of the Island of Martinique had been exalted to grandeur and lofty honors?

Josephine asked these questions to herself, as dreaming and thoughtful she swung in the hammock and gazed toward the horizon upon the sea, which, in its blue depths and brilliancy, hung there as if heaven had lowered itself down to earth. That sea was a pathway to France, and already once before had its waves wafted a daughter of the Island of Martinique to a throne.

Thus ran the thoughts of Josephine. She thought of Françoise d'Aubigné, and of her wondrous story. A poor wanderer, fleeing from France to search for happiness beyond the seas in a foreign land, M. d'Aubigné had landed in Martinique with his young wife. There Françoise was born, there passed away the first years of her life. Once, when a child of three years old, she was bitten by a venomous serpent, and her life was saved only through the devotion of her black nurse, who sucked alike poison and death from the wound. Another time, as she was on a voyage

with her parents, the vessel was in danger of being captured by a corsair; and a third time a powerful whirlwind carried into the waves of the sea the little Françoise, who was walking on the shore, but a large black dog, her companion and favorite, sprang after her, seized her dress with its teeth, and carried the child back to the shore, where sobbing for joy her mother received her.

Fate had reserved great things for Françoise, and with all manner of horrors it submitted the child to probation to make of it a strong and noble woman.

A severer blow came when her father, losing in gambling all the property which he had gathered in Martinique, died suddenly, leaving his family in poverty and want. Another blow more severe still came when on her return to France, whither her mother was going with her, she lost this last prop of her youth and childhood. Madame d'Aubigné died, and her body was committed to the waves; and, as a destitute orphan, Françoise d'Aubigné touched the soil of France.

And what became of the poor orphan of the creole of Martinique?

She became the wife of a king, and nearly a queen! For Françoise d'Aubigné, the widow of Scarron, the governess of the children of Louis XIV, had caused the mother of these children, the beautiful Madame de Montespan, to be cast away, and she became the friend, the beloved, the secret spouse of the king; and the lofty Louis, who could say of himself, "*L'état c'est moi*," he, with all the power of his will, with all his authority, was the humble vassal of Françoise d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon!

This was the first princess whom Martinique had given to the world!

Was it not possible that the prophecies of the old negro woman could be realized? could not once more a daughter of the Island of Martinique be exalted into a princess?

"You will be Queen of France!" the negress had said.

No, it was mere folly to believe in such a ridiculous prophecy. The throne of France was now occupied. Alongside of her consort, the good, the well-beloved Louis XVI, the young and beautiful Queen Marie Antoinette, the daughter of the mighty Empress Maria Theresa, sat on the throne. She was young, she was beloved throughout France, and she had already, to the great delight of her husband and of his people, borne an heir to the throne of France.

The throne of the lilies stood then on firm and sure foundations, and the prophecies of the old negress belonged only to the kingdom of fables.*

CHAPTER III.

THE BETROTHAL.

Six months had barely elapsed since Josephine's return from the convent when the family Tascher de la Pagerie received from their relatives in Paris letters which were to be of the greatest importance for the whole family.

The beautiful Madame de Renaudin, sister of M. Tascher de la Pagerie, had settled in Paris after having rid herself of an unhappy marriage with a man, coarse and addicted to gambling, and after having, through a legal separation, reobtained her freedom. She lived there in the closest intimacy with the Marquis de Beauharnais, who, for many years, at an earlier period, had resided as governor on the Island of Martinique, and there had bound himself to the whole family of Tascher de la Pagerie by the ties of a cordial

* This prophecy, nearly as related above, was told by the Empress Josephine herself to her maids of honor in the castle of Navarra.—See "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Josephine, la Ville, la Cour et les Salons de Paris sous l'Empiré, par Madame Georgette Ducrest."

friendship. His wife, during her residence in Martinique, had been the most tender friend of Madame de Renaudin, and when the marchioness bore a second son to her husband, Madame de Renaudin had stood as godmother, and promised to love and protect the child of her friend as if she were his mother.

Chance brought on the opportunity of accomplishing this promise and of fulfilling the oath made to God before the altar. The Marchioness de Beauharnais returned to France in the year 1763 with her husband and her two sons, but died there a short time after; and Madame de Renaudin, true to her oath, hastened to replace the natural guardian, the mother.

Perhaps she had but followed the dictates of her heart, perhaps against her will a sentiment of joy had passed over her at the death of the poor marchioness, for, by this death, one at least of the two obstacles intervening between Madame de Renaudin and the Marquis de Beauharnais had been removed. Both married, both of the Catholic religion, death alone could make their hands free, and confer upon them the right of joining hands together for all their days.

They loved one another, they had ceased long ago to make a secret of it; they avowed it to each other and to their dependants, for their brave, loyal, and noble hearts would not stoop to falsehood and deception, and they had the courage to acknowledge what their sentiments were.

Death had then made free the hand of the Marquis de Beauharnais, but life held yet in bondage the hand of the Baroness de Renaudin.

As long as her husband lived, she could not, though legally divorced from him, conscientiously think of a second marriage.

But she possessed the courage and the loyalty of true love; she had seen and experienced enough of the world to

despise its judgments, and with cheerful determination do what in her conscience she held to be good and right.

Before God's altar she had promised to the deceased Marchioness de Beauharnais to be a mother to her son; she loved the child and she loved the father of this child, and, as she was now free, as she had no duties which might restrain her footsteps, she followed the voice of her heart and braved public opinion.

She had purchased not far from Paris, at Noisy-le-Grand, a country residence, and there passed the summer with the Marquis de Beauharnais, with his two sons and their tutor.

The marquis owned a superb hotel in Paris, in Thevenot Street, and there, during winter, he resided with his two sons and the Baroness de Renaudin, the mother, the guardian of his two orphan sons, the friend, the confidante, the companion of his quiet life, entirely devoted to study, to the arts, to the sciences, and to household pleasures.

Thus the years passed away; the two sons of the Marquis de Beauharnais had grown up under the care of their maternal friend: they had been through their collegiate course, had been one year students at Heidelberg, had returned, had been through the drill of soldier and officer, a mere form which custom then imposed on young men of high birth; and the younger son Alexander, the godchild of the Baroness de Renaudin, had scarcely passed his sixteenth year when he received his commission as sub-lieutenant.

A year afterward his elder brother married one of his cousins, the Countess Claude Beauharnais, and the sight of this youthful happy love excited envy in the heart of the young lieutenant of seventeen years, and awoke in him a longing for a similar blessedness. Freely and without reserve he communicated his wishes to his father, begged of him to choose him a wife, and promised to take readily and

cheerfully as such her whom his father or his sponsor, his second mother, would select for him.

A few months later reached Martinique the letters which, as already said, were to be of the utmost importance to the family of M. Tascher de la Pagerie.

The first of these letters was from the Marquis de Beauharnais, and addressed to the parents of Josephine, but with a considerate and delicate tact the marquis had not written the letter with his own hand, but had dictated it to his son Alexander, so as to prove to the family of his friend De la Pagerie that the son was in perfect unison of sentiment with the father, and that the latter only expressed what the son desired and approved.

"I cannot express," wrote the marquis, "how much satisfaction I have in being at this moment able to give you a proof of the inclination and friendship which I always have had for you. As you will perceive, this satisfaction is not merely on the surface.

"My two sons," continues he, "are now enjoying an annual income of forty thousand livres. It is in your power to give me your daughter to enjoy this income with my son, the *chevalier*. The esteem and affection he feels for Madame de Renaudin makes him passionately desire to be united with her niece. I can assure you that I am only gratifying his wishes when I pray you to give me for him your second daughter, whose age corresponds at best with his. I sincerely wish that your eldest daughter were a few years younger, for then she would certainly have had the preference, the more so that she is described to me under the most advantageous colors. But I confess my son, who is but seventeen and a half years old, thinks that a young lady of fifteen is too near him in age. This is one of those cases in which reasonable and reflecting parents will accommodate themselves to circumstances."

M. de Beauharnais adds that his son possesses all the

qualities necessary to make a woman happy. At the same time he declares that, as regards his future daughter-in-law, he has no claims to a dowry, for his son already possesses an income of forty thousand livres from his mother's legacy, and that after his father's death he will inherit besides an annual income of twenty-five thousand livres. He then entreats M. de la Pagerie, as soon as practicable, to send his daughter to France, and, if possible, to bring her himself. The marquis then addresses himself directly to the wife of M. de la Pagerie, and repeats to her in nearly the same words his proposal, and endeavors also to excuse to her the choice of the second daughter.

"The most flattering things have been told me," writes he, "of your eldest daughter, but my son finds her, with her fifteen years, too old for him. My son is worthy of becoming your son-in-law; Nature has gifted him with good and fine parts, and his income is sufficiently large to share it with a wife qualified to render him happy. Such a one I trust to find in your second daughter; may she resemble you, mad. me, and I can no longer doubt of my son's happiness! I feel extremely happy to see my long-cherished wishes satisfied! I can ot express to you how great will be my joy to see riveted forever, by means of this union of our two families, the inclination and the friendship which have already so long chained us together. I trust that Mademoiselle de la Pagerie will not refuse her consent. Allow me to embrace her and already to greet her as my own beloved daughter." *

To this letter was addressed a note from Madame de Renaudin to her brother and to her sister-in-law. She openly acknowledges that she it was who desired this union, and who had brought the matter to its present stage, and she endeavors to meet the objection that it would appear

* Aubenas, "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 78.

strange for a young lady to undertake a long journey in search of a future husband, whilst it would be more expedient that the bridegroom should make the journey to his bride, to receive her at the hands of her parents, and bring her with him to a new home. But this bride of thirteen years must first be trained for her future destiny; she is not to be in the house of her future father-in-law, but in the house of Madame de Renaudin, her aunt, and she is there to receive the completion of her education and that higher culture which her parents, even with all the necessary means, could not give her in Martinique.

"We are of opinion," she writes, "that the young people must see one another and please each other, before we bring this matter to a close, for they are both too dear to us to desire to coerce them against their inclination. Your daughter will find in me a true and kind mother, and I am sure that she will find the happiness of her future life in the contemplated union, for the chevalier is well qualified to make a wife happy. All that I can say of him exhausts by no means the praise he deserves. He has a pleasant countenance, an excellent figure, wit, genius, knowledge, and, what is more than this, all the noble qualities of heart and soul are united in him, and he must consequently be loved by all who know him."

Meanwhile, before these letters reached Martinique, chance had already otherwise decided the fate of Mary, the second daughter of M. de la Pagerie. With one sentence it had destroyed all the family schemes. After three days of confinement to a bed of sickness, Mary had died of a violent fever, and when the letter, in which the Marquis de Beauharnais asked for her hand, reached her father, she had been buried three months.

M. Tascher de la Pagerie hastened to announce her death to the Marquis and to Madame de Renaudin; and, to prove to them how much he also had at heart a union of the two

families, he offered to his son, the chevalier, the hand of his third daughter, the little twelve-year-old Désirée. Undoubtedly it would have been more gratifying to him if the choice of the marquis had fallen upon his eldest daughter, and he makes this known very clearly in his answer to Madame de Renaudin.

"My eldest daughter," writes he, "Josephine, who is lately returned from the convent, and who has often desired me to take her to France, will, believe me, be somewhat sensitive at the preference given to her younger sisters. Josephine has a beautiful head, beautiful eyes and arms, and also a wonderful talent for music. During her stay in the convent I procured her a guitar-teacher; she has made the best of the instruction received, and she has a glorious voice. It is a pity she has not the opportunity of completing her education in France; and were I to have my wish, I would bring her to you instead of my other two daughters."

Meanwhile the Marquis de Beauharnais, as well as his son, found that the youngest daughter of M. de la Pagerie was too young for their impatient desire to bring to a favorable issue these important family concerns, and that the eldest of the daughters ought to have the preference. The son of the marquis especially pronounced himself decidedly in favor of Josephine, and father and son, as well as Madame de Renaudin, turned imploringly to M. Tascher de la Pagerie, praying that he would bring them his eldest daughter.

Now, for the first time, when the choice of the Beauharnais family had irrevocably fallen upon Josephine, now for the first time was this proposed marriage made known to her, and her consent asked.

Josephine, whose young heart was like a blank sheet of paper, whereon love had as yet written no name, Josephine rejoiced at the prospect of accomplishing the secret wish of

her maiden heart, to go to Paris—Paris, the burning desire of all creoles—Paris, after all the narratives and descriptions, which had been made to Josephine, rose before the soul of the young maiden as a golden morning dream, a charming fairy world; and full of gratitude she already loved her future husband, to whom she owed the happiness of becoming acquainted with the city of wonders and pleasures.

She therefore acquiesced without regret at being separated from her parents and from her sister, from the home of all her sweet reminiscences of youth, and joyously, in August of the year 1779, she embarked on board the vessel which was to take her with her father to France.

In the middle of October they both, after a stormy passage, touched the soil of France and announced to their relatives their safe arrival. Alexandre de Beauharnais, full of impatient longings to see his unknown young bride, hastened to Brest to bid her and her father welcome, and to accompany them to Paris.

The first meeting of the young couple decided their future. Josephine, smiling and blushing, avowed to her father that she was willing and ready to marry M. Alexandre Beauharnais; and, the very first day of his meeting with Josephine, Alexandre wrote to his father that he was enchanted with the choice made, and that he felt strongly convinced that, at the side of so charming, sweet, and lovely a being, he would lead a happy and sunny life.

The love of the children had crowned all the schemes of the parents, and on the 13th of December, 1779, the marriage of the young couple took place. On the 13th of December, Mademoiselle Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie became the Viscountess Josephine de Beauharnais.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YOUNG BONAPARTE.

In the same year, 1779, in which Josephine de la Pagerie for the first time left Martinique for France, a vessel which had sailed from Corsica brought to France a boy who, not only as regards Josephine's life, but also as regards all Europe, yea, the whole world, was to be of the highest importance, and who, with the iron step of fatality, was to walk through Europe to subvert thrones and raise up new ones; to tread nations in the dust, and to lift up others from the dust; to break tyranny's chains in which people languished, so as to impose upon them his own chains.

This boy was Napoleon Bonaparte, the son of the advocate Charles de Bonaparte.

From Ajaccio, the principal town of Corsica, came the ship which brought to France the boy, his father, and his two elder brothers. In Ajaccio the family of the Bonapartes had been settled for more than a century. There also Napoleon had passed the first years of his life, in the family circle with his parents, and in joyous amusements with his five brothers and sisters.

His father, Charles de Bonaparte, belonged to one of the noble families of Corsica, and was one of the most influential men on the island. His mother, Letitia Ramolina, was well known throughout the island for her beauty, and the only woman who could have been her rival, for she was her equal in beauty, youth, and grace, was her dearest friend, the beautiful Panonia de Comnène, afterward the mother of the Duchess d'Abrantes.

The beautiful Letitia Ramolina was married to Charles de Bonaparte the same year that her friend Panonia de Comnène became the wife of M. de Permont, a high French

official in Ajaccio. Corsica was then the undisputed property of the kingdom of France, and, however proud the Corsicans were of their island, yet they were satisfied to be called subjects of France, and to have their beautiful island considered as a province of France.

Napoleon Bonaparte was the fifth child of his parents, the favorite of his beautiful mother Letitia, who was the life of the household, the ruler of the family. She governed the house, she educated the children; she knew, with the genuine ability of a housekeeper, of a mother, how to spend with careful frugality the moderate income of her husband; how to economize, and yet how to give to each what was needed. As to the father, in the hours of leisure which business, political debates, and amusements allowed him to give to his home and family, his children were an agreeable recreation, an interesting pastime; and when the children, carried away by the sparkling fire of youth, shouted or cried too loud, the father endeavored to palliate their misdemeanor, and obtain their pardon from their mother. Then Letitia's eyes were fastened with a flaming glance upon her husband, and, imperatively bidding him leave the children, she would say: "Let them alone. Their education concerns you not. I am the one to keep the eyes upon them."

She trained them up with the severity of a father and with the tenderness of a mother. Inexorable against every vice of heart and character, she was lenient and indulgent toward petty offences which sprang up from the inconsiderateness and spiritedness of youth. Every tendency to vulgar sentiments, to mean envy or selfishness, she strove to uproot by galling indignation; but every thing which was great and lofty, all sentiments of honor, of courage, of large-heartedness, of generosity, of kindness, she nursed and cherished in the hearts of her children. It was a glorious sight to contemplate this young mother when with her beautiful,

rosy countenance glowing with enthusiasm and blessedness, she stood among her children, and in fiery, expressive manner spoke to the listening group of the great and brave of old, of the deeds of a Cæsar, of a Hannibal; when she spoke of Brutus, who, though he loved Cæsar, yet, greater than Cæsar, and a more exalted Roman in his love for the republic, sacrificed his love to the fatherland; or when she, with that burning glow which all Corsicans, the women as well as the men, cherish for their home and for the historical greatness of their dear island, told them of the bravery and self-denial even unto death with which the Corsicans for centuries had fought for the freedom of their island; how, faithful to the ancient sacred law of blood, they never let the misdeed pass unpunished; they never feared the foe, however powerful he might be, but revenged on him the evil which he had committed against sister or brother, father or mother.

And when Letitia thus spoke to her children in the beautiful and harmonious language of her country, the eyes of the little Napoleon were all aflame, his childish countenance suddenly assumed a grave expression, and on the little body of the child was seen a man's head, glowing with power, energy, and pride.

These narratives of his mother, these enthusiastic stories of heroes of the past, which the boy, with loud-beating heart, with countenance blanched by mental excitement, gathered from the beautiful lips of his mother, were the highest pleasure of the little Napoleon, and often in future years has the emperor amid his glory thought of those days never to be forgotten, when the child's heart and soul hung on his mother's lips, and listened to her wondrous stories of heroes.

These narratives of Letitia, this enthusiasm which her glowing language awoke in the heart of the child, this whole education which Letitia gave to her children, became the

corner-stone of their future. As a sower, Letitia scattered the seed from which hero and warrior were to spring forth, and the grain which fell into the heart of her little Napoleon found a good soil, and grew and prospered, and became a laurel-tree, which adorned the whole family of the Bonapartes with the blooming crown of immortality.

Great men are ever much more the sons of their mother than of the father, while seldom have great men seen their own greatness survive in their sons. This is a wonderful secret of Nature, which perhaps cannot be explained, but which cannot be denied.

Goethe was the true son of his talented and noble mother, but he could leave as a legacy to his son only the fame of a name, and not his genius. Henry IV., the son of a noble, spiritual and large-hearted Jeanne de Navarre, could not leave to France, which worshipped and loved her king, could not leave to his people, a successor who resembled him, and who would inherit his sharp-sightedness, his prudence, his courage, and his greatness of soul. His son and successor was Louis XIII., a king whose misfortune it was ever to be overruled, ever to be humbled, ever to stand in the shade of two superior natures, which excited his envy, but which he was never competent to overcome; ever overshadowed by the past glories which his father's fame threw upon him, overshadowed by the ruler and mentor of his choice, his minister, the Cardinal de Richelieu, who darkened his whole sad existence.

Napoleon was the son of his mother, the large-hearted and high-minded Letitia Ramolina. But how distant was the son of the hero, who, from a poor second lieutenant, had forced his way to the throne of France! how distant the poor little Duke de Reichstadt from his great father! Even over the life of this son of an eminent father weighed a shadow—the shadow of his father's greatness. Under this shadow which the column of Vendôme

cast from Paris to the imperial city of Vienna, which the steep rock of St. Helena cast even upon the castle of Schönbrunn, under this shadow died the Duke de Reichstadt, the unfortunate son of his eminent father.

The little Napoleon was always a shy, reserved, quiet boy. For hours long he could hide in some obscure corner of the house or of the garden, and sit there with head bent low and eyes closed, half asleep and half dreaming; but when he opened his eyes, what a life in those looks! What animation, what exuberance in his whole being, when awaking from his childish dreams he mixed again with his brothers, sisters, and friends!

Letitia's words and example had penetrated the soul of the child with the highest emotions of honor and human dignity, and the little boy of seven years exhibited oftentimes the sentiments of honor, pride, and obstinacy of a man. Every bodily correction to which he was submitted made him turn pale and tremble, not from pain but for shame, filled him with indignation, and was apt to bring on sickness. In Corsica still prevailed the custom of severe discipline for children, and in all the classes of the school the rod was applied as a means of punishment and reformation. To beat one's wife was considered in Corsica, as everywhere else, an unpardonable brutality; but parents as well as teachers whipped children to mould them into noble, refined, honorable men.

The little Napoleon would not adapt himself to the blessings of this education, and the mere threats of the rod-switching deprived the child of his senses and threw him into convulsions. But though the little Napoleon was gloomy, monosyllabic, and quiet, yet was he from early childhood the favorite of all who knew him, and he already wielded over brothers, sisters, and companions, a wonderful influence.

When a boy of four years old, Letitia sent him to a sort

of play-school, where boys and girls amused themselves together and learned the A B C. The young Napoleon was soon the soul of the little company. The boys obeyed him, and submitted to his will; the girls trembled before him, and yet with a smile they pressed toward him merely to be near him and to have a place at his side. And the four-year child already practised a tender chivalry. One of his little school-companions had made an impression on his heart; he honored her with special favors, sat at her side during the lessons, and when they left school to return home, the little Napoleon never missed, with complete gravity of countenance, to offer his arm to his favorite of five years of age and to accompany her to her home. But the sight of this gallant, with his diminutive, compact, and broad figure, over which the large head, with its earnestness of expression, seemed so incongruous, and which moved on with so much gravity, while the socks fell from the naked calves over the heels—all this excited the merriment of the other children; and when, arm-in-arm with his little schoolmate, he thus moved on, the other urchins in great glee shouted after him: "*Napoleone di mezza calzetta dall' amore à Giacominetta!*" ("Napoleon in socks is the lover of the little Giacominetta!")

The boy endured these taunts with the stoic composure of a philosopher, but never after did he offer his arm to the little Giacominetta, and never afterward did his socks hang down over his heels.

When from this "mixed school" he passed into a boys' school, the little Napoleon distinguished himself above all the other boys by his ambition, his deep jealousy, his perseverance at learning and studying, and he soon became the favorite of the Abbé Recco,* who taught at the royal col-

* Napoleon, in his testament, written at St. Helena, willed a fixed sum of money to this Professor Recco, in gratitude for the instruction given him in his youth.

lege of Ajaccio as professor. A few times every week the worthy professor would gather his pupils in a large hall, to read them lectures upon ancient history, and especially upon the history of Rome; and, in order to give to this hall a worthy and significant ornament, he had it adorned on either side with two large and costly banners, one of which had the initials S. P. Q. R., and represented the standard of ancient Rome; facing it and on the opposite side of the hall was the standard of Carthage.

Under the shadows of these standards were ranged the seats for the scholars, and in the vacant centre of the large hall was the professor's chair, from which the Abbé Recco dictated to his pupils the history of the heroic deeds of ancient Rome.

The elder children sat under the larger standard, under the standard of Rome, and the junior boys immediately opposite, under the standard of Carthage; and as Napoleon Bonaparte was the youngest scholar of the institution, he sat near the Carthaginian standard, whilst his brother Joseph, his senior by five years, had his seat facing him on the Roman side. Though at the commencement of the lectures Napoleon's delight had been great, and though he had listened with enthusiasm to the history of the struggles, and to the martial achievements of the ancient Romans, the little Napoleon soon manifested an unmistaken repugnance to attend these lectures. He would turn pale, as with his brother he entered the hall, and with head bowed low, and dark, angry countenance, took his seat. A few days afterward he declared to his brother Joseph, his lips drawn in by anguish, that he would no more attend the lectures.

"And why not?" asked Joseph, astonished. "Do you take no interest in the Roman history? Can you not follow the lecture?"

The little Napoleon darted upon his brother a look of inexpressible contempt. "I would be a simpleton if the

history of heroes did not interest me," said he, "and I understand everything the good Professor Recco says—I understand it so well that I often know beforehand what his warriors and heroes will do."

"Well, then, since you have such a lively interest in the history of the Romans, why will you no more follow the lectures?"

"No, I will not, I cannot," murmured Napoleon, sadly.

"Tell me, at least, the reason, Napoleon," said his brother.

The boy looked straight before him, for a long time hesitating and undecided; then he threw up his head in a very decided manner, and gazed on his brother with flaming eyes.

"Yes," cried he, passionately, "I will tell you! I can no longer endure the shame to sit down under the standard of the conquered and humiliated Carthaginians. I do not deserve to be so disgraced."

"But, Napoleon," said Joseph, laughing, "why trouble yourself about the standard of the old Carthaginians? One is just as well under it as under the Roman standard."

"Is it, then, the same to you under which standard you sit? Do you not consider it as a great honor to sit under the standard of the victorious Romans?"

"I look upon the one as being without honor, and upon the other as being without shame," said Joseph, smiling.

"If it is so," cried out the little Napoleon, throwing himself on his brother's neck, "if it is for you no great sacrifice, then, I implore you to save me, to make me happy, for you can do it! Let us change seats; give me your place under the standard of Rome, and take my place instead."

Joseph declared himself ready to do so, and when the two brothers came next time to the lecture, Napoleon, with uplifted head and triumphant countenance, took his seat under the standard of victorious Rome.

But soon the expression of joy faded away from his face, and his features were overcast, and with a restless, sad look, he repeatedly turned himself toward his brother Joseph, who sat facing him under the standard of the conquered race.

Silent and sad he went home with Joseph, and when his mother questioned him about the cause of his sorrow, he confessed, with tears in his eyes, that he was a heartless egotist, that he had been unjust and cruel toward Joseph, that he had cheated his brother of his place of honor and had seated himself in it.

It required the most earnest assurances of Joseph that he placed no value whatever on the seat; it required all the persuasiveness and authority of Letitia to appease the boy, and to prevail upon him to resume the conquered seat.*

As the course of instruction which the boys had received in Ajaccio was not sufficient for the times, and for the capacities of his sons, their father passed over to France with Joseph and Napoleon, to take advantage of the favorable resources for a more complete education.

Napoleon saw the time of departure approach with an apparently indifferent mind, only his face was somewhat paler, he was still more monosyllabic and more reserved than before; and his eyes, full of an indescribable expression of tenderness and admiration, followed all the movements of his mother, as if to print deeply in his soul the beloved image, so as to take it with him beyond the seas, in all its freshness and beauty.

He wept not as he bade her farewell; not a word of sorrow or regret did he speak, but he embraced his mother with impassioned fondness, he kissed her hands, her forehead, her large black eyes, he sank down before her and kissed her feet, then sprang up, and, after casting upon her whole figure a deep, glowing look, he rushed away to em-

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 40.

bark at once, without waiting for brother or father, who were yet bidding a touching farewell to relatives and friends.

Letitia gazed after her Napoleon with glowing and wide-open eyes; she wept not, she complained not, but she pressed her two hands on her heart as if to keep it from breaking asunder, from bleeding to death; then she called all her children around her, and, folding them up in her arms, exclaimed: "Join your hands and pray with me that our little Napoleon may return home to us a noble and great man."

As soon as they had prosperously landed in France, the father placed his two sons in the college of Autun, and then travelled farther on to Paris, there to obtain, through the influence of his patrons and friends, a place for his daughter Marianne (afterward Elise) in St. Cyr, an institution for the daughters of noblemen, and also a place for Napoleon in the military school of Brienne. His efforts were crowned with success; and whilst Joseph remained at college in Autun, Napoleon had to part with him and go to Brienne.

When the brothers bade farewell one to another, Joseph wept bitterly, and his sighs and tears choked the tender words of farewell which his quivering lips would have uttered.

Napoleon was quiet, and as his eye moistened with a tear, he endeavored to hide it, and turned aside ashamed of himself and nearly indignant, for he did not wish the Abbé Simon, one of the professors of the college, who was present at the parting of the brothers, to see his unmanly tenderness.

But the Abbé Simon had seen that tear, and when Napoleon was gone he said to Joseph: "Napoleon has shed but one tear, but that tear proves his deep sorrow as much as all your tears." *

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 26.

Taciturn and quiet as he had been in Ajaccio, the little Napoleon was equally so at the military school of Brienne, where he remained from his eleventh to his sixteenth year. His character had always something sombre and hidden; his eye seemed turned more inwardly than outwardly; and his fellowship with his books seemed to procure him a more pleasant recreation than the company of his schoolmates, whose childish joys and pleasures he despised or pretended to do so, because his limited pecuniary resources did not allow him to share with them pleasures of an expensive nature.

But, though still and reserved, he always was friendly and courteous to his comrades, grateful for every mark of friendship and kindness, and always ready to protect the young and feeble against the overbearing and the strong, censuring with grave authority every injustice, and with Spartan harshness throwing his contempt into the very face of him who, according to his standard, had offended against honor, the lofty spirit and the dignity of a freeman.

It could not fail that soon Napoleon should win over his schoolmates a marked moral influence; that they would listen to him as if he were their superior; that they should feel something akin to fear in presence of the flashing eyes of this little boy of barely fourteen years, whose pale, expressive countenance, when illumined with anger, almost seemed to them more terrible than that of the irritated face of the teacher, and whom they therefore more willingly and more unconditionally obeyed than the principal of the establishment.

One day the latter had forbidden the scholars to go to the fair in a neighboring locality, because they had lately been guilty of excesses on a similar occasion; and, so as to be sure that the scholars would not trespass against his orders, the principal had the outside gate in the front yard locked.

This last circumstance kindled Napoleon's anger; he considered it as an insult that the scholars should be treated as prisoners.

"Had we been ordered in the name of the law to remain here," cried he, "then honor itself would have claimed from us to remain, for law commands obedience to our superiors. But since we are treated as slaves, who are by main force compelled to submission, then honor claims from us to prove to our oppressors that we are free beings, and that we desire to remain such. We are treated as prisoners of war, kept under lock and bolt, but no one has demanded our word of honor that we will make no effort to escape this subjection. Whosoever has a brave heart and a soul full of honor's love, let him follow me!"

All the youngsters followed him without hesitation. More submissive to this pale, small boy of fourteen years, than to the severe, strong, and exalted principal, none dared oppose him as he stood in the garden, facing a remote place in the wall, and giving orders to undermine it, so as to make an outlet. All obeyed the given orders, all were animated with burning zeal, with cheerful alacrity; and after an hour of earnest labor the work was done, and the passage under the wall completed.

The scholars wanted to rush with jubilant cries through the opening, and gain their freedom outside of the wall, but Napoleon held them back.

"I will go first," said he. "I have been your leader throughout this expedition, now I will be the first to pass out, that upon me may fall the punishment when we are discovered."

The young men fell back silently and respectfully, while, proud and stately as a field-marshal who gives the signal for the battle, Napoleon passed through their ranks, to be the first from the crowd to go through the newly-made passage.

It could not fail that the daring of these "prisoners of war" should be discovered, that the principal should be the very same day informed that the young men had, notwithstanding his strict orders, notwithstanding the closed gate, made a way for themselves, and had visited the prohibited fair, while the principal believed them to be in the garden.

A strict inquiry took place the next morning. With threatening tones, the principal ordered the young men to name him who had guided them to so unheard-of a deed, who had misled them into disobedience and insubordination. But all were still; none wished to be a traitor, not even when the principal promised to all full pardon, full impunity, if they would but name the instigator of their guilty action.

But as no one spoke, as no one would name him, Napoleon gave himself up as the culpable one.

"I alone am guilty," cried he, proudly, "I alone deserve punishment. These have done only what I commanded them—they have but followed my orders, nothing more. The guilt and the punishment are mine alone."

The principal, glad to know the guilty one, kept his promise, and, forgiving the rest, decided to punish only the one who acknowledged himself to have been the leader.

Napoleon was, therefore, sentenced to the severest and most degrading punishment known in the institution—to the so-called "monk's penalty." That is to say, the future young soldier, in the coarse woollen garment of a mendicant friar, was on his knees, to devour his meal from an earthen vessel in the middle of the dining-room, while all the other boys were seated at the table.

A deathly pallor overspread the face of the boy when he heard this sentence. He had been for many days imprisoned in a cell with bread and water, and he had without a murmur submitted to this correction, endured already on a

former occasion, but this degrading punishment broke his courage.

Stunned, as it were, and barely conscious, he allowed the costume of the punishment to be put on, but when he had been led into the dining-room, where all the scholars were gathered for the noonday meal, when he was forced upon his knees, he sank down to the ground with a heavy sigh, and was seized with violent convulsions.

The rector himself, moved with deepest sympathy for the wounded spirit of the boy, hastened to raise up Napoleon. At the same moment rushed into the hall one of the teachers of the institution, M. Patrault, who had just been informed of the execution which was about to be carried out on Napoleon. With tears in his eyes, he hastened to Napoleon, and with trembling hands tore from his shoulders the detestable garment, and broke out at the same time in loud complaints that his best scholar, his first mathematician, was to be dishonored and treated in an unworthy manner.

Napoleon, however, was not always the reserved, grave boy who took no part in the recreations and pleasures of the rest of his young schoolmates. Whenever these amusements were of a more serious, of a higher nature, Napoleon gladly and willingly took a part in them. Now and then in the institution, on festivals, theatrical representations took place, and on these occasions the citizens of Brienne were allowed to be present.

But to maintain respectable order, every one who desired to be present at the representation had to procure a card of admission signed by the principal. On the day of the exhibition, at the different doors of the institution, were posted guards who received the admission cards, and whose strict orders were to let no one pass in without them. These posts, which were filled by the scholars, were under the supervision of superior and inferior officers, and were confided only to the most distinguished and most praiseworthy students.

One day, Voltaire's tragedy, "The Death of Cæsar," was exhibited. Napoleon had the post of honor of a first lieutenant for this festivity, and with grave earnestness he filled the duties of his office.

Suddenly at the entrance of the garden arose a loud noise and vehement recriminations of threatening and abusive voices.

It was Margaret Hauté, the porter's wife, who wanted to come in, though she had no card of admission. She was well known to all the students, for at the gate of the institution she had a little stall of fruits, eggs, milk, and cakes, and all the boys purchased from her every day, and liked to jest and joke with the pleasant and obliging woman.

Margaret Hauté had therefore considered it of no importance to procure a card of admission, which thing she considered to be superfluous for such an important and well-known personage as herself. The greater was her astonishment and anger when admission was refused, and she therefore began to clamor loudly, hoping by this means to attract some of the scholars, who would recognize her and procure her admittance. Meanwhile the post guardian dared not act without superior orders, and the inferior officer hastened to communicate the important event to the first lieutenant, Napoleon de Bonaparte, and receive his decision.

Napoleon, who ordinarily was kind to the fruit-vender, and gladly jested with the humorous and coarse woman, listened to the report of the lieutenant with furrowed brow and dark countenance, and with severe dignity gave his orders: "Remove that woman, who takes upon herself to introduce licentiousness into the camp."*

* Afterward, when First Consul, Napoleon sent for this woman and her husband to come to Paris, and he gave them the lucrative position of porter at the castle of Malmaison, which charge they retained unto their death.

CHAPTER V.

THE UNHAPPY MARRIAGE.

WHILE the boy Napoleon de Bonaparte pursued his studies as a student in Brienne, she, who was one day to share his greatness and his fame, had already appeared on the world's stage as the wife of another. Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie was already received in the highest society of Paris as the Viscountess de Beauharnais.

Every thing seemed to promise to the young couple a happy, secure future, free from care. They were both young, wealthy, of good family, and though the parents had planned this marriage and joined together the hands of the young couple, yet it was their good fortune that love should tie and strengthen the bond which mere expediency had formed.

Yes, they loved one another, these young married people of sixteen and eighteen. How could it have been otherwise, when they both met each other with the candid and honest desire to make one another happy; when each of them had been so well adapted to the other that their brilliant, good, and beautiful qualities were so prominent that their eyes were blinded to the possibility of imperfections and vices which perchance remained in the obscure background of their virtue and of their amiableness?

Josephine had entered upon her marriage with a pure maiden heart, and soon this heart glowed with enthusiasm for her young husband, who in reality was well qualified to excite enthusiasm in a young maid and instil into her a passionate attachment. Alexandre de Beauharnais was one of the most brilliant and most beloved personages at the court of Versailles. His face had all the beauty of regularity; his figure, marked by a lofty, even if somewhat heavy form,

was tall, well knit, and of wonderful elasticity and energy; his manners were noble and prepossessing, fine and natural. Even in a court so distinguished as that of Versailles for many remarkable *chevaliers*, the Viscount de Beauharnais was considered as one of the most lovely and most gifted: even the young Queen Marie Antoinette honored him with special distinction. She had called him the most beautiful dancer of Versailles, and consequently it was very natural that up to the time of his marriage he should be invited to every court-ball, and there should each time enjoy the pleasure of being requested to dance with the queen.

This flattering distinction of the Queen Marie Antoinette had naturally made the young viscount the mark of attention of all these beautiful, young, and coquettish ladies of Versailles. They used to say of him, that in the dancing-room he was a zephyr, fluttering from flower to flower, but at the head of his regiment he was a Bayard, dreaming only of war and carnage.

It was, therefore, quite natural that so brilliant and so preferred a cavalier, a young man of so many varied accomplishments, a being so impassioned, so gallant, should soon become the object of the most tender and passionate fondness from a young wife, who in her quiet native land had seen none to compare with him, and who became for her the ideal of beauty, chivalry, elegance, and whom, in her devoted and admiring love, she used to call her own Achilles.

Josephine loved her husband; she loved him with all the devotedness and fire of a creole; she loved him and breathed but for him, and to be with him seemed to her life's golden, blessed dream. Added to all this, came the joys and raptures of a Parisian life—these new, unknown, diversified pleasures of society, these manifold distractions and entertainments of the great city. Josephine abandoned herself to all this with the joy and wantonness of an inno-

cent, unsuspicious being. With all these glorious things round about her, she felt as if surrounded by a sea of blessedness and pleasure, and she plunged into it with the quiet daring of innocency, which foresees not what breakers and abysses this sea encloses under the shining surface.

But these breakers were there, and against them was the happiness of Josephine's love soon to be dashed to pieces.

She loved her young husband with her whole heart, with all her soul. But he, the young, the flattered Viscount Alexandre de Beauharnais, he also loved his young wife, whom the wish and will of his superiors had placed at his side.

He had not chosen her because he loved her, but only because he had thought it expedient and advisable to become married, and because the unknown Mademoiselle de la Pagerie had been offered to him as "a good settlement." Perhaps, also, he had contracted this marriage to get rid all at once of those manifold ties, intrigues, and attachments which his open, unrestrained life of youth had woven around him, for his marriage with the young creole had put an end to many love-intrigues which perchance threatened to be inconvenient and burdensome.

At first charmed by her foreign, unaccustomed appearance, transported by her ingenuous grace, her sweet, lovely amiableness and freshness, he had fully decided to love his young wife, and, with all the triumphant pride of a lover, he had led Josephine into society, into the saloons.

But his eye was not blinded by the ravishment of a real and true love, and in the drawing-room he saw what, in the solitude of the residence of Noisy, where the young couple had retired for a few weeks after their marriage, he might never have missed—he saw that Josephine possessed not the lofty elegance and the exquisite manners of the ladies of the Parisian saloons. She always was a charming, artless, graceful young woman, but she lacked the striking advan-

tages of a real drawing-room lady; she lacked that perfect self-possession, that pliancy of refinement, that sparkling wit, and that penetration, which then characterized the ladies of the higher Parisian society, and which the young viscount had but lately so fondly and passionately admired in the beautiful and celebrated Baroness de B.

The viscount saw all these deficiencies of his young wife's social education, and this darkened his brow and brought on his cheek the flush of shame. He was cruel enough to reproach Josephine, in somewhat harsh and imperious tones, of her lack of higher culture, and thus the first matrimonial difference clouded the skies of marriage happiness, which the young unsuspecting wife had believed would ever be bright with sunshine.

Josephine, however, loved her young husband too fondly not to cheerfully comply with all his wishes, not to strive to replace what he reproached her to be lacking.

On a sudden she left the brilliant, enchanting Paris, which had entranced her with its many joys and its many distractions, and, as her husband had to be for some time at Blois with his regiment, she went to Noisy, to her aunt's residence, so as to labor at her higher mental culture, at the side of the lovely and intellectual Madame de Renaudin.

Josephine had hitherto, as a simple, sentimental young lady, played the guitar, and chirped with it, in her fresh but uncultivated voice, her sweet songs of love. She gave up the guitar, the favorite instrument of the creoles, and exchanged it for the harp, for which attainment as well as for the art of singing she procured the best and ablest masters. Even a dancing-master had to come to Noisy to give to the young viscountess that perfection of art which would enable her, without fear, to dance at a ball alongside of the Viscount de Beauharnais, "the beautiful dancer of Versailles." With her aunt she read the works of the writers and poets who were then praised and loved, and

with wonderful predilection she also studied botany, to which science she ever clung during her life, and which threw on her existence gleams of joy when the sun of her happiness had long set.

Josephine, who out of pure love for her husband learned and studied zealously, communicated to the viscount, in her letters, every advancement she made in her studies; and she was proud and happy when he applauded her efforts, and when in his letters he praised her assiduity and her progress.

But evidently these letters of the viscount contained nothing of that love and ardor which the young fiery creole longed for from her husband; they were not the utterances of a young, anxious lover, of an enthusiastic, worshipping husband; but they were addressed to Josephine with the quiet, cool benignity of a considerate friend, of a mentor, of a tutor who knows full well how much above his pupil soars his own mind, and with what supreme deference this pupil must look up to him.

"I am delighted," wrote he once—"delighted at your zeal to acquire knowledge and culture; this zeal, which we must ever cherish, is ever the source of purest enjoyments, and possesses the glorious advantage, when we follow its dictates, of never producing any grief. If you persevere in the resolution you have taken, if you continue to labor with unabated zeal at your personal improvement, be assured that the knowledge you will have acquired will exalt you highly above all others; and whereas science and modesty will be combined in you, you will succeed in becoming an accomplished woman. The talents which you cultivate have their pleasant side, and if you devote to them a portion of the day, you will unite the agreeable to the useful." *

This is what Alexandre de Beauharnais wanted. His

* "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 110.

wife, through her knowledge, was to be highly exalted above all others. She was to study the sciences, and become what is now called a learned woman, but what was then termed a philosophical woman.

The ambition of the ardent viscount required that his young wife should be the rival of his learned, verse-writing aunt, the Baroness Fanny de Beauharnais; that Josephine, if not the most beautiful and most intellectual woman of Paris, should be the most accomplished.

But these extravagant expectations did not, unfortunately, coincide entirely with the tastes and mental tendencies of Josephine. No one was less qualified than she to be a philosophical woman, and to make the sciences a serious study. It was far from her ambition to desire to shine by her knowledge; and the learned and scientific Baroness de Beauharnais only excited fear and antagonism on account of her stiff and pretentious pedantry, which seemed to Josephine to have but little in harmony with a woman's being.

Josephine loved the sciences and the arts, but she did not wish to convert herself into their devoted priestess. She wished merely to adorn herself with their blossoms, to take delight in their fragrance, and to rejoice in their beauty. With instinctive sentiment she did not wish to have the grace and youthful freshness of her womanly appearance marred by knowledge; her heart longed not for the ambition of being called a learned woman; she only wished to be a beloved wife.

But the viscount, instead of recognizing and cherishing the tender and sacred treasures which reposed in the heart of his young wife, ridiculed her for her sensitiveness; allowed himself, through displeasure at her uncultivated mind, to utter unreasonable reproaches, and to act harshly toward his wife; and her tears were not calculated to conciliate him or to gain his heart. He treated Josephine with a sort of contemptuous compassion, with a mocking superiority, and

her young, deeply-wounded soul, intimidated and bleeding, shrank back into itself. Josephine became taciturn, embarrassed, and mute, in her husband's presence; she preferred being silent, rather than by her conversation, which might not appear intellectual and piquant enough for the viscount, to annoy and irritate him.

Confidence and harmony had flown away from the household of the young couple. From his timid, silent wife, with tears in her eyes and a mute complaint on her trembling lips, the husband rushed away into the world, into society, to the boisterous joys of a garrison's life, or else to the dangerous, intoxicating amusements which the refined world of the drawing-rooms offered him.

Scarcely after a two years' marriage, the young bridegroom was again the zephyr of the drawing-room; and, breaking asunder the bonds with which the marriage and the household had bound him, he fluttered again from flower to flower, was once more the gallant cavalier of the belles, forgot duty and wife, to pay his attentions and bring his homage to the ladies of the court.

But this neglect which she now experienced from her husband, this evident preference for other women, suddenly awoke Josephine from her painful resignation, from her quiet melancholy. The young, patient, retreating wife was changed at once into an irritated lioness, and, amid the refinements of the French polish, with all its gilded accompaniments, uprose the glowing, impassioned, threatening creole.

Josephine, wounded both in her vanity and in her love —Josephine wished not and could not bear, as a passive, silent sufferer, the neglect of her husband; he had insulted her as a woman, and the wrath of a woman rose within her. She screened not her jealousy from her husband; she reproached him for preferring other women to his wife, for neglecting her for the sake of others, and she required that

to her alone he should do homage, that to her alone he should consecrate love and allegiance. She wept, she complained, when she learned that, whilst she was left at home unnoticed, he had been here and there in the company of other women; she allowed herself to be so carried away by jealousy as to make violent reproaches against her husband.

But tears and reproaches are not in the least calculated to bring back to a wife the heart of a husband, and jealousy recalls not a husband's love, when that love has unfolded his pinions and flown away. It only causes the poor butterfly to feel that marriage had tied its wings with a thread, and that it constantly recalls him away, with the severe admonitions of duty, from the beautiful flowers toward which he desires to fly.

The complaints and reproaches of Josephine, however much they proved her love, had precisely the contrary effect from what she expected. Through them she wanted to bring back her husband to her love, but she repelled him further still; he flew away from her complaints to the merry society of his friends, male and female, and left Josephine alone at Noisy to weep over her wretchedness.

Notwithstanding all this, they were both to be again reunited one to another in a new bond of love and happiness. On the 3d of September, 1781, Josephine presented to her husband a son, the heir of his name, and for whom the father had already so long craved. Alexandre came to Noisy to be present at the birth of his child, and with true, sincere affection he embraced son and mother, and swore everlasting love and fidelity to both.

But circumstances were stronger than the will of this young man of twenty-two years. The monotonous life of Noisy, the quietude which prevailed in the house on account of the young mother, could not long retain captive the fiery young man. He endured this life of solitude, of watching at the bedside, of listening to the child's cries, for a whole

week, and then was drawn away with irresistible attraction to Paris; the father's tenderness could no longer restrain the glowing ardor, the impassioned longings for distraction in the young man; and the viscount left Noisy to lead once more in Paris or with his garrison the free, unrestrained dissipations of his earlier days.

Josephine was comfortless. She had hoped the son would retain the father, but he left her alone, alone with the child, and with all the torments of her jealousy.

It is true, he came back now and then to see his son, his little Eugene, and also to make amends to the young, sick, and suffering mother, by a few days' presence, for the many days of absence.

But Josephine, irritated, jealous, too young, too inexperienced to reflect, Josephine committed the fault of receiving her husband every time he came, with reproaches and complaints, and of meeting him with violent scenes of jealousy and of offended dignity. The viscount himself, so young, so impassioned, had not the patience to go with calm indifference through the purgatory of such scenes. His proud heart rebelled against the chains with which marriage would bind him; he was angry with this woman who dared reproach him; he was the more vexed that his conscience told him she was unjust toward him, that he was the innocent one. He returned her complaints with deriding scorn; he allowed himself to be carried away by her reproaches to the manifestation of violent anger; and the tempest of matrimonial discord raged through this house, which at first seemed to have been built for a temple of peace and happiness.

The parents of the young couple saw with deep, heartfelt concern the gap deepening between them both, and which every day widened more and more, and as their warnings and wishes now remained fruitless, they resolved to try if a long absence might not heal the wounds which they

both had inflicted upon their own hearts. At the request of his father and of Madame de Renaudin, the viscount undertook a long journey to Italy, from which he returned only after nearly nine months' absence.

What the relatives had hoped from this journey seemed to be realized. The viscount returned home to his Josephine with a penitent, tender heart; and Josephine, enchanted with his tenderness, with the pliant loveliness of his whole being—Josephine, with a smile of blessedness and with happy dreams of the future, rested once more on the bosom of the man whom, even in her angry moods, she had never ceased to love.

But after a few months passed in happiness and harmony, the viscount was once more obliged to separate himself from his wife, to meet his regiment, which was now in Verdun. Absence soon broke the slender threads which had bound together the hearts of husband and wife. Alexandre abandoned himself to his tendencies to dissipation, and Josephine to her jealousy. During the frequent visits which the viscount paid to his wife in Noisy, he was received with tears and reproaches, which always ended in violent scenes of anger and bitterness.

Such an existence, full of ever-recurring storms and ceaseless discord, weighed heavily on the hearts of both husband and wife, and made them long for an issue from this labyrinth of an unhappy marriage. Yet neither of them dreamed of a separation; not only their son, the little Eugene, kept them from such thoughts, but also the new hopes which Josephine carried in her bosom would have made such thoughts appear criminal. It was necessary to endeavor to bear life as well as one could, and not allow one's self to be too much lacerated by its thorns, even if there was no further hope of gathering its roses.

Alexandre de Beauharnais, even if he lacked the skill of being a faithful, devoted husband, was a noble and good-

natured man, whose generous heart wanted to punish himself alone for the error of this marriage, which weighed so heavily on husband and wife; and, in order to procure peace to both, he resolved to become an exile, to tear away pitilessly the attractive ties which society, friends, and women, had woven around him. If he could not be a good husband, he might at least be a good soldier; and, whereas his heart could not adopt the resolution of devoting itself with exclusive affection to his wife, he resolved to devote himself entirely to that love to which he had never been disloyal, the love of fame. His ambitious nature longed for honors and distinction; his restless, youthful courage craved for action and battle-fields; and, as no opportunity offered itself on land, Alexandre de Beauharnais decided to search on the seas for what was denied him on land.

The Marquis de Bouillé, governor of Martinique, had just arrived in France, to propose to the government a new expedition against the British colonies in the Antilles. Already this fearless and enterprising man, since he had been in Martinique, with the forces at his disposal, with the help of the young creoles, and supported by the squadrons which lay in Port Royal, had conquered Dominique, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Christophe, Mièvres, and Montserrat, and now he contemplated an attack upon the rich and important island of Jamaica, whose conquest he trusted would force the English into peace.

Alexandre de Beauharnais wanted nothing more attractive than to join this important and daring enterprise of the Marquis de Bouillé. With recommendations from his uncle, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the viscount hastened to the Marquis de Bouillé, begged of him instantly the privilege of serving under him, and offered his services as adjutant.

The marquis received with kindness a young man so

earnestly recommended, and gave him the hope of fulfilling his wishes. These hopes were not, however, realized; and the viscount, no longer able to endure the burden of uncertainty and of domestic discord, decided to leave France on his own responsibility, to sail for Martinique, and there to enlist as a simple volunteer, under the orders of the governor.

In September, 1782, he left Noisy for Brest, there to embark for Martinique. At the hour of departure the love, which for so long had been hidden under the dark cloud of jealousy and discord, awoke in all its glow and energy in the hearts of the young couple. With streaming eyes Josephine embraced her husband, and in the most touching tones entreated him to remain with her, entreated him not to tear the father away from the son, who already recognized him and stretched his little hands toward him, nor from the child yet unborn in her bosom. Carried away by so much intensity of affection, by such a fond, all-pardoning love, Alexandre was deeply moved; he regretted the past, and the decision he had taken to leave his wife and his family. All the sweet emotions of peace, of home, of paternal bliss, of married life, overcame him in this hour of farewell with resistless power, and in Josephine's arms he wept bitter tears of repentance, of love, of farewell.

But these tears, no more than his wife's regrets, could make him waver in his determination.

The word of separation had been spoken, and it had to be fulfilled. Amid the anguish of parting, he felt for himself the necessity of breaking, by means of a long absence, with the evil practices of the past, and to make amends for the sad errors of his youth.

He left his home to win in a distant land the happiness which he had in vain sought at the side of his wife, of his son, and of his family. Before the ship upon which he was to embark for his journey weighed anchor, he took a last

farewell of his family in a letter addressed to Madame de Renaudin.

"I have," said he, "received the letter which tells of your good wishes for the future, and I have read with the deepest interest the assurances of your attachment. These assurances would still have been more flattering to me, could they have convinced me that my actual course has your approbation, and that you estimate rightly my determination, and the sacrifice I am making. However, I have on my side conscience, which applauds me for preferring, to the real, actual joys of a quiet and pleasurable existence, the prospect, even if a remote one, of preferment, which may secure me a distinguished position and a distinction which may be of advantage to my children. The greater have been my sacrifices, the more commendable it is to have made them; and if chance only favors my determination, then the laurels I will win shall make ample amends for all troubles and hardships, and shall change all my anguish into joy!—Be kind enough, I pray you, to embrace for me, my father, my wife, and Eugene!" *

It is evident that Alexandre de Beauharnais had gone to Martinique to win fame and to fight for laurels. But chance favored not his resolves. He had no sooner landed in Martinique, than the news spread that negotiations had begun between England and France. M. de Bouillé received strict orders to make no attack on Jamaica; and a few weeks after, on the 20th of January, 1783, the preliminaries of peace were signed at Versailles. A few months later, peace was concluded, and all the conquests made by the Marquis de Bouillé were returned to England.

Alexandre de Beauharnais had then come in vain to Martinique. No fame was to be won—no laurels could be gathered there.

* "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i, p. 133.

Unfortunately, however, the viscount found another occupation for his restless heart, for the vague cravings of his affections. He made the acquaintance there with a young creole, who had been a widow for the last six months, and who had returned to Martinique from France to pass there her year's mourning. But her heart had no mourning for her deceased husband; it longed for Paris, it craved for the world and its joys. She was yet, though a few years older than the viscount, a young woman; she was beautiful—of that wondrous, enticing beauty peculiar to the creoles; she was an accomplished mistress in the difficult art of pleasing, and she formed the design of gaining the heart of the impulsive Viscount Alexandre de Beauharnais. This design was not undertaken because he seemed worthy of love, but because she wanted to revenge herself on the family of Tascher de la Pagerie, which family had been for a long time at enmity with her own, and had given free and open expression against the too easy manners and light behavior of the beautiful widow. She wanted to take vengeance for these insults by seducing from M. de la Pagerie his own son-in-law, and by enjoying the triumph of having charmed away the husband from his daughter.

The proverb says, "What woman will, woman can!" and what the beautiful Madame de Gisard wanted was not so very hard to achieve. All she wished was to hold complete sway over the heart of a young man who felt heavily burdened with the fetters of marriage; who, now that the schemes of ambition had failed, reproached his young wife that she was the cause of his misfortune; that for her sake he had exiled himself from home, and sentenced himself to the dulness and loneliness of a village-life in Martinique. The society of the beautiful Madame de Gisard brought at least novelty and distraction to this loneliness; she gave occupation to the heart weary with connubial storms; she excited his fancy and his desires.

Madame de Gisard knew how to use all these advantages; she wanted to triumph over the family of De la Pagerie, she wanted to return to Paris in the company of a young, handsome, and distinguished lover.

It was not enough to win the love of the viscount; she had to drive him into the resolution of separating from his wife, of accusing her of unfaithfulness and guilt, so as to have the right of casting her away, in order that she herself might openly occupy her place. Madame de Gisard had the requisite talent to carry out her plans, and to acquire full control over the otherwise rebellious and proud heart of the young man. She first began to lead him into open rupture with his father and mother-in-law. Through respect for them, the viscount had avoided appearing in public with Madame de Gisard, and betraying the intimacy which existed between them. Madame de Gisard ridiculed his bashfulness and submissive spirit; she considered this servility to the head of the family as absurd, and she drove the viscount by means of scorn and sarcasm to open revolt.

Then, after separating him from his wife's family, she attacked the wife herself. With all the cunning and smoothness of a seducing demon, she encompassed the young man's heart, and filled it with mistrust against Josephine. She accused the forsaken one with levity and unfaithfulness; she filled his heart with jealousy and rancor; she used all the means of perfidy and calumny of which a woman is capable, and in which she finds a refuge when her object is to ruin, and she succeeded completely.

Alexandre de Beauharnais was now entirely hers; he was gathering against Josephine anger and vengeance; and even when he received the news that, on the 13th of April, 1783, his young wife had given birth to a daughter at Noisy, his soul was not moved by soft emotions, by milder sentiments of reconciliation.

Madame de Gisard had taught him that henceforth he

need no more be on the defensive in reference to the reproaches of Josephine, but that he now must be the aggressor; that, to justify his own guiltiness, he must accuse his wife of guilt. She had offered herself as the price of his reconquered freedom; and the viscount, overcome with love, anger, and jealousy, was anxious to become worthy of this price.

He left Martinique and returned to Noisy, not to embrace and bless his daughter Eugénie Hortense, but to bow down the mother's head with the curse of shame. He accused, without listening to any justification, and, with all the vehemence of misguided passion, he asked for an immediate separation, an immediate divorce. Vain were the expostulations, the prayers of his father and of Madame de Renaudin. Vain were the tears, the assurances of innocence from Josephine. The tears of an injured woman, the prayers of his sorrowing relatives, were impotent against the whisperings and the seducing smiles of the beautiful Madame de Gisard, who had secretly accompanied him to France, and who had now over him an unconditional sway.

The viscount brought before Parliament a complaint for separation from his wife, and based it upon the most improbable and most shameless accusations.

Josephine, who, for two years in loneliness and abandonment, had awaited the return of her husband; Josephine, who had always hoped, through the voice of her children, to recall her husband to herself, saw herself suddenly threatened with a new, unexpected tempest. Two years of suffering were finally to be rewarded by a scandalous process, which exposed her person to the idle and malicious tongues of the Parisians.

She had, however, to submit to fate; she had to bow her head to the storm, and trust for her justification to the mercy of God and to the justice of the Parliament. Dur-

ing the time of the process she withdrew, according to custom, into a convent, and for nearly one year hid herself with her shame and her anguish in the abbey of Pantemont, in the street Grenelle, St. Germain. However, she was not alone; her aunt, Madame de Renaudin, accompanied her, and every day came the Marquis de Beauharnais, her husband's father, bringing her the children, who, during the time of the unfortunate process, were to remain at Noisy, under the guardianship of their grandfather and of a worthy governess. The members of her husband's family rivalled each other in their manifestations of affection to a woman so much injured and so incriminated, and openly before the world they declared themselves against the viscount, who, blinded by passion and entirely in the chains of this ensnaring woman, was justifying the innocency of his wife by his own indiscreet demeanor—by the public exhibition of his passion for Madame de Gisard, and thus caused the accusations launched against Josephine to recoil upon his own head.

At last, after one year of debates, of careful considerations and investigations, of receiving evidence, and of hearing witnesses, the Parliament pronounced its decision.

Josephine was declared absolutely innocent of the crimes brought against her, and was entirely acquitted of the accusation of unfaithfulness. The Parliament pronounced the solemn decree: The accusation directed against the Viscountess de Beauharnais was simply a malicious calumny. The innocency of the accused wife was evident, and consequently the Viscount de Beauharnais was bound to receive again his wife into his house. However, the viscountess was permitted and allowed not to share the same residence with her husband, and to separate herself from him. In this case the viscount was condemned to pay to his wife an annual pension of ten thousand francs, and to leave with her mother his daughter Eugénie Hortense,

while he, the father, should provide for the education of the son.

Exonerated from the disgraceful imputation of faithlessness, Josephine was again free to leave the convent and return to the life of the world. It was her husband's family which now prepared for the poor young woman the most beautiful and most touching triumph. The father of her accuser, the Marquis de Beauharnais, as well as his elder son and wife, the Duke and Duchess de la Rochefoucauld, and the Baroness Fanny de Beauharnais, came in their state carriages to the abbey to receive Josephine and lead her back to Paris. They had been joined by a great number of the most respectable and most noble ladies of the Parisian aristocracy, all in their state carriages, and in the splendor of their armorial trappings and liveries, as if it were to accompany a queen returning home.

Josephine shed tears of blessed joy when quitting her small, sombre rooms in the abbey. She entered into the reception-room to bid farewell to the prioress, and there met all these friends and relatives, who saluted her with looks of deepest tenderness and sympathy, and embraced her in their arms as one found again, as one long desired. This hour of triumph indemnified her for the sorrows and sufferings of the unhappy year which the poor wife of scarcely twenty years of age, and fleeing from calumny and hatred, had sighed away in the desolate and lonesome convent. She was free, she was justified; the disgrace was removed from her head; she was again authorized to be the mother of her children; she saw herself surrounded by loving parents, by true friends, and yet in her heart there was a sting. Notwithstanding his cruelty, his harshness, though he had abandoned and despised her, her heart could not be forced into hating the husband for whom she had so much wept and suffered. Her tears had impressed his image yet deeper in her heart. He was the husband of her first love, the

father of her children; how could Josephine have hated him, how could her heart, so soft and true, cherish animosity against him?

At the side of her husband's father, and holding her daughter in her arms, Josephine entered Paris. Behind them came a long train of brilliant equipages, of relatives and friends. The passers-by stopped to see the brilliant procession move before them, and to ask what it meant. Some had recognized the viscountess, and they told to others of the sufferings and of the acquittal of the poor young woman; and the people, easily affected and sympathizing, rejoiced in the decision of the Parliament, and with shouts and applause followed the carriage of the young wife.

The marquis, her father-in-law, turned smilingly to Josephine.

"Do you see, my daughter," said he, "what a triumph you enjoy, and how much you are beloved and recognized?"

Josephine bent down toward the little Hortense and kissed her.

"Ah," said she, in a low voice, "we are returning home, but the father of my children will not bid us welcome. For a pressure of his hand, for a kind word from him, I would gladly give the lofty triumph of this hour."

No, Alexandre de Beauharnais did not bid welcome to Josephine in his father's house, which they had occupied together. Ashamed and irritated, he had sped away from Paris, and returned to his regiment at Verdun.

On the arm of the Marquis de Beauharnais, Josephine traversed the apartments in which she had lived with her husband, and which she now saw again as a widow, whom not death but life had separated from her husband. Her father-in-law saw the tears standing in her eyes, and, with the refined sympathy of a sensitive mind, he understood the painful thoughts which agitated the soul of the young wife.

He fondly folded her in his arms, and laid his blessing hand on the head of the little Hortense.

"I have lost my son Alexandre," said he, "but I have found in his stead a daughter. Yes, Josephine, you are and will remain my daughter, and to you and to your children I will be a true father. My son has parted from us, but we remain together in harmony and love, and as long as I live my daughter Josephine will never want a protector."

CHAPTER VI.

TRIANON AND MARIE ANTOINETTE.

WHILST the Viscountess Josephine de Beauharnais, the empress of the future, was living in enforced widowhood, the life of Marie Antoinette, the queen of the present, resembled a serene, golden, sunny dream; her countenance, beaming with youth, beauty, and grace, had never yet been darkened with a cloud; her large blue eyes had not yet been dimmed with tears.

In Fontainebleau, whither Josephine had retired with her father-in-law, who through unfortunate events had lost the greatest part of his fortune—in Fontainebleau lived the future Empress of France in sad monotony; in Versailles, in Trianon, lived the present Queen of France in the dazzling splendor of her glory, of her youth, and of her beauty. In Trianon—this first gift of love from the king to his wife—the Queen of France dreamed life away in a pleasant idyl, in a joyous pastoral amusement; there, she tried to forget that she was queen, that is to say, that she was the slave of etiquette; there she tried to indemnify herself for the tediousness, the emptiness, the heartlessness of the great festivals in the Tuileries and in Versailles.

In Trianon, Marie Antoinette desired to be the domestic wife, the pleasant, youthful woman, as in the Tuileries and at Versailles she was the proud and lofty queen. Marie Antoinette felt her days obscured by the splendors of royalty; the crown weighed heavily on her beautiful head, which seemed made for a crown of myrtle and roses; life's earnestness had not yet cast its breath on those rosy cheeks and robbed of youth's charm the smile on those crimson lips.

And why should not Marie Antoinette have smiled and been joyous? Every thing shone round about her; every thing seemed to promise an enduring harvest of felicity, for the surface of France was calm and bright, and the queen's vision had not yet been made keen enough by experience to penetrate below this shining surface and see the precipices already hidden underneath.

These precipices were yet covered with flowers, and the skies floating above them seemed yet cloudless. The French people appeared to retain yet for the royal family that enthusiastic devotedness which they had manifested for centuries; they fondly proclaimed to the queen, whenever she appeared, their affection, their admiration; they were not weary with the expressions of their rapture and their worship, and Marie Antoinette was not weary of listening to these jubilant manifestations with which she was received in the theatre, on the streets, in the gardens of the Tuileries, on the terraces of Versailles; she was not weary of returning thanks with a friendly nod or with a gracious smile.

All the Parisians seemed still to be, as once, at the arrival of the Dauphin, they had been called by the Baron de Vesenval, "the queen's lovers," and also to rival one another in manifesting their allegiance.

Even the fish-women of Paris shared the general enthusiasm; and when, in 1781, the queen had given to her husband a son, and to his people a future monarch, the ladies

of "the Halls" were amongst the most enthusiastic friends of the queen. They even came to Versailles to congratulate the royal couple on the dauphin's birth, to salute the young dauphin as the heir to the crown of France, and to sing under the window of the king some songs, one of which so pleased the king that oftentimes afterward, in his quiet and happy hours, he used to sing a verse of it with a smile on his lip. This verse, which even Marie Antoinette sang, ran thus:

"Ne craignez pas, cher papa,
D' voir augmenter vot' famille,
Le bon Dieu z'y pourvoira:
Faits-en tant qu' Versailles en fourmille;
Yeût-il cent Bourbons cheu nos
Ya du pain, du laurier pour tous."*

In Trianon, Marie Antoinette passed her happiest hours and days; there, the queen changed herself into a shepherdess; there, vanished from her the empty splendors of purple and ermine, of etiquette and ceremonial; there, she enjoyed life in its purity, in its innocency, in its naturalness; such was the ideal Marie Antoinette wished to realize in Trianon.

A simple dress of white muslin, a light kerchief of gauze, a straw hat with a gayly-colored ribbon, such was the attire of the queen and of the princesses whom Marie Antoinette invited. For the only etiquette which prevailed at Trianon was this: that no one from the court, even princes or princesses, should come to Trianon without having received an invitation from the queen to that effect. Even the king submitted to this ceremonial, and had expressly promised his consort never to come to Trianon without an invitation, and, so as to please the queen, no sooner did she announce her intention of retiring to her country-residence, than he

*Madame de Campan, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," vol. i., p. 218.

was always the first who hastened to obtain the favor of an invitation.

In Trianon, Louis ceased to be king as well as Marie Antoinette ceased to be queen. There Louis XVI. was but the farmer of the lady of the castle; the Count d'Artois was the miller, and the learned Count de Provence, the schoolmaster. For each of them had been erected in the gardens of Trianon a separate house suited to their respective avocations.

The farmer Louis had his farm-house built in Swiss style, with a balcony of finely-carved wood at the gable-end, and with stalls attached to the house, and where bellowed the stately red cows of Switzerland; behind the house was a small garden in which the variegated convolvulus and the daisy shed their fragrance.

The Count d'Artois had, near the stream which flowed through the park, his miller's house, with an enormous wheel, made of wooden spokes joined together, and which moved lustily in the water, and adorned the clear brook with wavelets of foam.

The Count de Provence had, under the shadow of a mulberry-tree, his house, with a large school-room in it; and oftentimes the whole court-society were converted into scholars of both sexes, who took their seats on the benches of the school-room, whilst the Count de Provence, in a long coat with lead buttons and with an immense rod in his hand, ascended the cathedra and delivered to his school-children a humorous and piquant lecture, all sparkling with wit.

The princesses also had in this "grove of Paradise," as Marie Antoinette called the woods of Trianon, their cottages, where they milked cows, made butter, and searched for eggs in the hens' nests. In the midst of all these cottages and Swiss houses stood the cottage of the farming Marie Antoinette; it was the finest and the most beautiful one of all, adorned with vases full of fragrant blossoms and surrounded

by flowering plants and by cozy bowers of verdure. This cottage was the highest delight of the queen's life, the enchanting toy of her happiness. Even the little castle of Trianon, however simple and modest, seemed too splendid for the taste of the pastoral queen. For in Trianon one was always reminded that the lady of this castle was a queen; there, servants were in livery; there, officials and names and titles were to be found, even when etiquette was forbidden entrance into the halls of the little castle of Trianon. Marie Antoinette was no more queen there, it is true, but she was the lady of the palace to whom the highest respect was shown, and who therefore had been constrained expressly and strictly to order that at her entrance into the drawing-rooms the ladies would not interrupt the piece begun on the piano, nor stand up if seated at their embroidery, and that the gentlemen would keep on undisturbed their billiard-party or their game at trictrac.

But in her cottage all rank disappeared; there, was no distinction; there, ceased the glory of name and title, and no sooner was the castle abandoned for the cottages than each named the other with some Arcadic, pastoral appellation, and each busied himself with his rural avocations. How lustily the laughter, how merrily the song sounded from these cottages amid these bowers and groves; how the countenance of the farming-lady was lighted up with happiness and joy; with what delight rested upon her the eye of the farmer Louis, who in his blue blouse, with a straw hat on his head, with a rosy, fleshy, good-natured face, was exactly fitted for his part, and who found it no difficult task to hide under the farmer's garment the purple of the king!

How often was Marie Antoinette seen in her simple white dress, her glowing countenance shaded by a straw hat, bounding through the garden as light as a gazelle, and going from the barn to the milk-room, followed by the company she had invited to drink of her milk and eat of her

fresh eggs! How often, when the farmer Louis had secreted himself in a grove for the sake of reading, how often was he discovered there by the queen, torn away from his book and drawn to a *déjeuner* on the grass! When that was over, and Louis had gone back to his book, Marie Antoinette hastened to her cows to see them milked, or she went into the rocking-boat to fish, or else reposed on the lawn, busy as a peasant, with her spindle.

But this quiet occupation detained not long the lively, spirited farming-lady; with a loud voice, she called to her maids or companions from the cottages, and then began those merry, unrestrained amusements which the queen had introduced into society, and which since then have been introduced not only into the drawing-rooms of the upper classes, but also into the more austere circles of the wealthy burghers.

Then the queen with her court played at blindman's bluff, at pampam, or at a game invented by the Duke de Chartres, the future Duke Philippe d'Orleans, Egalité, and which game was called "descamper," a sort of hide-and-seek amusement, in which the ladies hid themselves in the shady bushes and groves, to be there discovered by the gentlemen, and then to endeavor by flight to save themselves, for if once caught and seized they had to purchase their liberty with a kiss.

When evening came all left the cottages for the little castle, and the pastoral recreations gave way to the higher enjoyments of refined society. Marie Antoinette was not in the castle of Trianon queen again, but she was not either the simple lady of the farm, she was the lady of the castle, and—the first amateur in the theatrical company which twice a week exhibited their pieces in the theatre of Trianon.

These theatrical performances were quite as much the queen's delight as her pastoral occupations in her farm-

cottages, and Marie Antoinette was unwearied in learning and studying her parts. She had chosen for teachers two pensioned actors, Caillot and Dazincourt, who had to come every day to Trianon to teach to the noble group of actors the small operas, vaudevilles, and dramas, which had been chosen for representation, and in which the queen naturally always played the part of first amateur, while the princesses, the wives of the Counts de Provence and Artois, the two Countesses de Polignac, undertook the other parts, even those of gentlemen, when the two brothers of the king, the only male members of this theatrical company, could not assume all the gentlemen's parts.

At first the audience at these representations was very limited. Only the king, the princes and the princesses of the royal household, not engaged in the performance, constituted the audience; but afterward it was found that to encourage the actors a little, a larger audience was needed; then the boxes were filled with the governesses of the princesses, the queen's waiting-women, whose sisters and daughters with a few other select ladies had been invited.

It was natural that those who had been thus preferred, and who enjoyed the privilege of seeing the Queen of France, the princes and princesses, appear as actors, should be full of admiration and applause at the talents displayed by the royal troupe; and as they alone formed the select audience, whose presence had for object to animate the *artistes*, they had also assumed the duty to excite and to vitalize the zeal and the fire of the players by their enthusiasm and by their liberal praises.

This applause of a grateful public blinded the royal actors as to their real merits, and excited in them the ambition to exhibit their artistic talents before a larger audience and to be admired. Consequently, the queen granted to the officers of the lifeguard and to the masters of the king's stalls and to their brothers, admittance into the theatre; the gentle-

men and ladies of the court had seats in the gilt boxes; a larger number of ladies were invited, and soon from all sides came requests for tickets of admission to the theatrical performances in the Trianon.

The same privileges which had been allowed to a few could not be, and it was not desirable that they should be, granted to all; those who were purposely refused revenged themselves of this refusal by an unsparing criticism on the performers and by bitter sarcasm at the Queen of France, who so far forgot her dignity as to play comedies before her subjects, and who played her part not always in such a manner as to give to a sharp criticism no reason for blame.

The queen possessed, it is true, the desire, but not the ability, to be an actress or a songstress. When she played the part of a comedian, no one felt tempted to laugh; but contrariwise it might often happen that, when her part was tragical, impressive and touching even to tears, the faces of her auditors brightened with involuntary laughter.

Once even it happened that a person from the audience, when the queen had not yet left the stage, cried aloud, and perhaps with the intention of being heard by her: "One must confess that royal acting is bad acting!"

Though she understood the words, yet the smile on her lips vanished not away; and as the Countess Diana de Polignac wished to persuade her to allow the impertinent one who had spoken these words, to be sought out and punished, the queen, shrugging her shoulders, answered: "My friend, I say as Madame de Maintenon: 'I am upon the stage, and must therefore be willing to be applauded or hissed.'"

Yes, she had to endure the applause or the hissing. Unfortunately, the number of those who hissed grew every day. The queen had provoked public expression since she bade it defiance. On the day she banished etiquette from its watchful duty at the apartments of the Queen of France, the public expression with its train of slanders and maliciousness

entered in through the open portals. The queen was blamed for her theatricals as well as for her simple, unadorned toilet, yet she was imitated in these two things, as even before the costly and luxurious toilet, the high head-gears of the queen, and also blindman's buff and descamper, had been imitated. Every woman now wanted such a simple *négligée*, such a head-dress, such a feather as Marie Antoinette. As once before, Madame Bertin, the celebrated milliner of the queen, had been circumvented to furnish a pattern of the queen's *coiffure*, so now all the ladies rushed upon her in flocks to procure the small caps, fichus, and mantelets, after the queen's model. The robes with long trains, the court-dresses of heavy silk, jewels and gold ornaments, were on a sudden despised; every thing which could add brilliancy and dignity to the toilet was banished, the greatest simplicity and *nonchalance* were now the fashion; every lady strove, if possible, to resemble a shepherdess of Watteau, and it was soon impossible to distinguish a duchess from an actress.

Not only the ladies but also the gentlemen were carried away by this flood of novelty. They gave up the boots with red heels, the embroidered garments, as already before they had given up laces, bandelets, gold fringes, and diamond buttons on the hats; they put on simple coats of cloth as the burgher and the man of the people wore; they abandoned their equipages, with their brilliant armorial trappings and the golden liveries, and found satisfaction in promenading the streets, with cane in hand, and with boots instead of buckled shoes.

It is true these street promenadings of the nobility were not oftentimes without inconvenience and molestation. As without the insignia of their rank and position they mixed with the society of the streets, entered into taverns and *cafés*, the people took them for what they seemed to be, for their equals, and instead of respectfully making way for them, the people claimed as much attention from them as

they themselves were willing to give. Often enough disputes and scuffles took place between the disguised nobleman and the man of the people, the laborer, or the commissionnaire, and at such experiments of hand to hand the victory was not to the nobleman, but to the fist of the man of the people.

The novelty of such scenes excited the fastidious aristocracy; it became a sort of passion to mix with the people, to frequent the *cabarets*, to strike some bargain at trade, to be the hero of a fist-fight, even if it ended by the stout workmen throwing down the aristocrats who had despised them. To be thrown down was no more considered by the nobility as a disgrace, and they applauded these affrays as once they had applauded duelling.

The aristocracy mixed with the people, adopted their manners and usages, even much of their mode of thinking, of their democratic opinions, and, by divesting themselves of their external dignity, of their halo, the nobility threw down the barrier of separation which stood between them and the democracy; that respect and esteem which the man of the people had hitherto maintained toward the nobleman vanished away.

The principle of equality, which was to have such fatal consequences for France, arose from the folly of the aristocracy; and Marie Antoinette was the one who, with her taste for simplicity, with her opposition to etiquette and ceremony, had called this principle into life.

Not only was the queen imitated in her simplicity, she was also imitated in her love of comedy. These theatrical amusements of the queen were a subject of reproach, and yet these private recreations of Marie Antoinette were the fashion of the day. The taste for theatrical representations made its way into all classes of society; soon there was no nobleman, no banker, not even a respectable, well-to-do merchant, who had not in his house a small theatre, and

who, with his family and friends, endeavored not to emulate on his own narrow stage the manners of the celebrated actors.

Before these days, a nobleman would have considered himself insulted and dishonored if he had been supposed to have become a comedian, or even to have assumed a comedian's garb, were it but in the home-circle. The queen by her example had now destroyed this prepossession, and it was now so much *bon ton* to act a comedy that even men of gravity, even the first magistrate of Paris, could so much forget the dignity of position as to commit to memory and even to act some of the parts of a buffoon.*

It was also soon considered to be highly fashionable to set one's self against the prejudice which had been hitherto fostered against actors; and, whereas the queen took lessons in singing from Garat, the opera-singer, and even sang duets with her, she threw down the wall of partition which had hitherto separated the *artistes* of the stage from good society.

Unfortunate queen, who, with the best qualities of the heart, was preparing her own ruin; who understood not that the freedom and license which she herself granted, would soon throw on the roof of the Tuileries the firebrand which reduced to dust and ashes the throne of the Bourbons!—unfortunate queen, who in her modesty would so gladly forget her exaltation and her majesty, and who thereby taught her subjects to make light of majesty and to despise the throne!

She saw not yet the abyss opening under her feet; the flowers of Trianon hid it from her view! She heard not the distant mutterings of the public mind, which, like the raging wave of the storm, swelled up nearer and nearer the throne to crush it one day under the howling thunders of the unshackled elements of the unloosed rage of the people!

* Montjoie, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette, Reine de France."

The skies, arching over the fragrant blossoms of the charming Trianon, and over the cottages of the farming queen, were yet serene and cloudless, and the voice of public opinion was yet drowned in the joyous laughter which echoed from the cottages of Trianon, or in the sweet harmonies which waved in the concert-hall, when the queen, with Garat, or with the Baron de Vaudreuil, the most welcome favorite of the ladies, and the most accomplished courtier of his day, sang her duets.

Repose and peace prevailed yet in Trianon, and the loyal subjects of the King of France made their pilgrimages to Trianon, there to admire the idyls of the queen and to watch for the favorable opportunity of espying the queen, Marie Antoinette, in her rustic costume, with a basket of eggs on her arm, or the spindle in hand, and to be greeted by her with a salutation, a friendly word. For Marie Antoinette in Trianon was only the lady of the mansion, or the farming-lady—so much so, that she had allowed the very last duties of etiquette, which separated the subject from the queen, to be abandoned, that even when with her gay company she was in Trianon, the gates of the park and of the castle were not closed to visitors, but were opened to any one who had secured from the keeper a card of admission; the benefit arising from these cards was applied by order of the queen to the relief of the poor of Versailles. It is true, one condition of small importance was attached, "by order of the queen," to the obtaining of such a card. It was necessary to belong to the nobility, or to the higher magistracy, so as to be entitled to purchase a card of admission into the Trianon, and this sole insignificant condition contained the germ of much evil and of bitter hatred. The merchant, the *épicier*, was conscious of a bitter insult in this order, which banished him from Trianon, which made it impossible for him to satisfy his curiosity, and to see the queen as a shepherdess, and the king as a farmer. This

order only whetted more and more the hatred and the contempt for the preferred classes, for the aristocrats, and turned the most important class of the population, the burgesses, into enemies of the queen. For it was the queen who had given this order which kept away from Trianon the tradesmen; it was the queen alone who ruled in Trianon: and, to vent vengeance on the queen's order, she was blamed for assuming a right belonging only to the King of France. Only he, the king, was entitled to give laws to France, only he could set on the very front of the law this seal: "DE PAR LE ROI."

And now the queen wanted to assume this privilege. In the castles of pleasure presented by the king to the queen, in Trianon as well as in St. Cloud, was seen at the entrance of the gardens a tablet, containing the regulations under which admission was granted to the public, and these two tablets began with the formula, "DE PAR LA REINE!" This unfortunate expression excited the ill-will and the anger of all France; every one felt himself injured, every one was satisfied to see therein an attack on the integrity of the monarchy, on the sovereignty of the king.

"It is no more the king alone who enacts laws," they said, "but the queen also assumes this right; she makes use of the formalities of the state, she issues laws without the approbation of the Parliament. The queen wants to place our king aside and despoil us of our rights, so as to take the king's place!"

And these complaints, these reproaches became so vehement, so loud, that their echoes resounded in the chambers of the king, so that even one of the ministers could make observations to the king on that subject, and say: "It is certainly immoral and impolitic for a queen of France to own castles for her own private use" *

* Campan, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 274.

The good Louis therefore ventured to speak to his consort on this subject, and to ask of her to remove this expression which gave so much offence, and which had so violently excited the public sentiment.

But the pure heart of Marie Antoinette rebelled against such a supposition; her pride was stirred up that she, a queen, the daughter of the Cæsars, should make concession to public opinion; that she should submit to this imaginary and invisible power, which dared despise her as a queen, which she recognized not and would not recognize!

This power, the public opinion, stood yet behind Marie Antoinette as an invisible, an unobserved phantom, which soon was to be transformed into a cruel monster, whose giant hand would pitilessly crush the happiness and the peace of the queen.

The prayers and expostulations of the king were in vain. Marie Antoinette would not bow to the public sentiment; she would not depart from her regulations, she would not strike off her "*De par la reine*," for the sake of "*De par le peuple.*"

"My name is there in its right place," said she, with a countenance beaming with resolution and pride; "these gardens and castles are my property, and I can very well issue orders in them, without interfering with state rights."

And the "*De par la reine*" remained on the regulation-tablets in Trianon as well as in St. Cloud; and the people, who, through birth or through official position, were not entitled to enter Trianon, came thither at least to read the tablets of rules at the gate of entrance, and to fill up their hearts with scorn and contempt, and to utter loud curses against this presumptuous and daring "*De par la reine*"

And this woman, whose pride and imperiousness kept away and scorned away the burgesses from the gates of Trianon, came to Trianon there to rest from the unbending

majesty of her sovereignty, and she herself used to say to her ladies, with her own enchanting smile, "To forget that she was queen."

The numberless fairy-tales related about the enchanted castle of the queen had found their way to Fontainebleau, and had been re-echoed in the quiet, lonely house where lived the Marquis de Beauharnais and his family. The marquis, always extremely attentive to procure for his beloved daughter-in-law some distraction and some recreation, proposed to Josephine to visit this Trianon, which furnished so much material for admiration and slander, and to make thither with a few friends a pleasure excursion.

Josephine gladly accepted the invitation; she longed for diversion and society. Her young, glowing heart had been healed and strengthened after the deep wound which the ever-beloved husband had inflicted; she had submitted to her fate; she was a divorced woman, but Parliament had by its judgment kept her honor free from every shadow; public opinion had pronounced itself in her favor; the love of her parents, of the father of him who had so shamefully accused her, so cruelly deserted her, endeavored to make compensation for what she had lost. Josephine could not trouble, with her sorrows, with her sad longings of soul, those who so much busied themselves in cheering her up. She had, therefore, so mastered herself as to appear content, as to dry her tears; and her youth, the freshness and elasticity of her mind, had come to the help of her efforts. She had at first smiled through effort, she soon did it from the force of youthful pleasure; she had at first repressed her tears by the power of her will, soon her tears were dried up and her eyes irradiated again the fire of youth and hope, of the hope once more to win her husband's heart, to return her two graceful and beloved children to their father, whom their youth needed, for whom every evening she raised to the God of love the prayers which their mother with

low, trembling voice and tears in her eyes made them say after her.

Josephine, then, in company with her aunt Madame de Renaudin and with her father-in-law the Marquis de Beauharnais, undertook this pleasure-excursion to Trianon. The sight of these glorious parks, these gardens so artistically laid out, charmed her and filled her with the sweet reminiscences of the loved home, of the beautiful gardens in Martinique, which she herself with her slaves had cultivated, in which she had planted those beautiful flowers whose liveliness of color and whose fragrance of blossom were here in hot-houses so much praised. The love of plants and flowers had ever remained fresh amid the storms and sorrows which in the last years had passed over her heart, and oftentimes she had sought in the study of botany forgetfulness and refreshment. With a vivacity and a joyfulness such as had not been seen in her for a long time, Josephine wandered about this beautiful park, these hot-houses and gardens, and, transported with joy and admiration, she exclaimed: "Oh, how happy must the queen be to call this paradise her own!"

The sound of approaching voices interrupted her in her observations and in her admiration, which, perchance, was not entirely free from envy. Through the foliage of the trees was seen a large company approaching the queen's farm-house, before which stood Josephine with her escort. At the curve of the path near the grove where Josephine stood, appeared a woman. A white muslin dress, not expanded by the stiff, ceremonious hoop-petticoat, but falling down in ample folds, wrapped up her tall, noble figure, a small lace kerchief covered the beautiful neck, and in part the splendid shoulders. The deep-blond unpowdered hair hung in heavy, curly locks on either side of the rosy cheeks; the head was covered with a large, round straw hat, adorned with long, streaming silk ribbons; on the arm, partly

covered with a black knit glove, hung an ornamented woven basket, which was completely filled with eggs.

"The queen!" murmured Josephine, trembling within herself, and, frightened at this unexpected meeting, she wanted to withdraw behind the grove, in the hope of being unnoticed by the farmer's wife passing by.

But Marie Antoinette had already seen her, and on her beautiful, smiling countenance was not for a moment expressed either surprise or concern at this unexpected meeting with uninvited strangers. She was so accustomed to see curiosity-seekers in her lovely Trianon, and to meet them, disturbed not in the least her unaffected serenity. A moment only she stood still, to allow her followers, the Duchesses de Polignac, the Princess de Lamballe, and the two Counts de Coigny, to draw near; then lightly and smilingly she walked toward the house near which Josephine bewildered and blushing stood, whilst the marquis bowed profoundly and reverentially.

The queen, who was about to pass by and enter into the house, stood still. Her large dark-blue eye was for a moment fixed with questioning expression upon Josephine, then a smile illumined her beautiful countenance. She had recognized the Viscountess de Beauharnais, though she had seen her only twice. Although, through her husband's rank and station, Josephine was entitled to appear at court, yet she had always, with all the retreating anxiety of inexperienced youth, endeavored to evade the solemnity of an official presentation. The young, lively, unaffected creole had cherished an invincible horror for the stiff court-etiquette, for the ceremonial court-dress of gold brocade, with the court-mantle strictly embroidered after the established pattern, and which terminated in a long, heavy train, for the majestic head-gear of feathers, flowers, laces, and veils, all towering up nearly a yard high, and, above all things, for those rules and laws which regulated and fixed every

word, every step, every movement, at a solemn presentation at court.

Marie Antoinette had had compassion on the timidity of the young creole, and to spare her the solemnity of a rigid presentation had twice received at a private audience the young Viscountess de Beauharnais, and had then received also her homage.*

The youthful, charming appearance of Josephine, her peculiar and at the same time ingenuous and graceful attitude, had not been without impression on the queen; and with the most sympathizing interest, she had heard of the sad disturbances which had clouded the matrimonial happiness of the young creole.

No longer, as before, had Marie Antoinette requested the Viscount de Beauharnais, the beautiful dancer of Versailles, to dance with her; and when Parliament had given its sentence, and openly and solemnly had proclaimed the innocency of Josephine, the accused wife, the queen also had loudly expressed her satisfaction at this judgment, and the Viscount de Beauharnais was no more invited to the court festivities.

About to enter into the house, the queen had recognized the young viscountess, and with a friendly movement of the head she beckoned her to approach, welcomed the marquis, whom her short-sightedness had not at once recognized, to her beloved Trianon, and she requested them both to visit her little kingdom as often as they would wish, and to examine every thing attentively.

In the goodness and generosity of her heart, the queen gladly desired to make amends to the young, timid woman, who, embarrassed and blushing, stood before her, for the sufferings she had endured, for the disgrace under which she had had to bow her head; she wanted to give the ac-

* Le Normand, "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 97.

cused innocent one a reparation of honor such as Parliament and public sentiment had already done.

She was consequently all goodness, all condescension, all confidence; she spoke to Josephine, not as a queen to her favored subjects, but as a young woman to a young woman, as to her equal. With sympathetic friendliness she made inquiries concerning the welfare of the viscountess and her family; she invited her to come often to Trianon, and, with a flattering allusion to the vast knowledge of the viscountess in botany, she asked her if she was satisfied with the arrangements of garden and hot-houses.

Josephine, with the sensitiveness and fine tact natural to her, felt that the trivial flattery of a courtier would but be a wretched and inappropriate return for so much goodness and loving-kindness; she felt that frankness and truth were the thanks due to the queen's large-heartedness.

She therefore answered the queen's questions with impartial sincerity, and, encouraged by the kindness of the queen, she openly and clearly gave her opinion concerning the arrangement of the hot-houses, and drew the attention of the queen to some precious and choice plants which she had noticed in the hot-houses.

Marie Antoinette listened to her with lively interest, and at parting extended to her in a friendly manner her beautiful hand.

"Come soon again, viscountess," said she, with that beautiful smile which ever won her true hearts; "you are worthy to enjoy the beauty of my beloved Trianon, for you have eyes and sense for the beautiful. Examine everything closely, and when we see one another again, tell me what you have observed and what has pleased you. It will ever be a pleasure to see you." *

But Josephine was no more to see the beautiful queen,

* The very words of the queen.—See Le Normand, "Histoire," &c., vol. i., p. 135.

so worthy of compassion; and these kind words which Marie Antoinette had spoken to her were the last which Josephine was ever to hear from her lips.

A few days after this visit to Trianon, Josephine received from her parents in Martinique letters which had for their object to persuade her with the tenderness of love, with all the reasons of wisdom, to return to her home, to the house of her parents, to withdraw with bold resolution from all the inconveniences and humiliations of her precarious and dangerous situation, and, instead of living in humble solitude as a divorced, despised woman, sooner to come to Martinique, and there in her parents' home be again the beloved and welcomed daughter.

Josephine hesitated still. She could not come to the resolution of abandoning the hope of a reunion with Alexandre de Beauharnais; she dreamt yet of the happiness of seeing the beloved wanderer return to his wife, to his children.

But her aunt and her father-in-law knew better than she that there was no prospect of such an event; they knew that the viscount was still the impassioned lover of the beautiful Madame de Gisard; that she held him too tightly in her web to look for a possibility of his returning to his legitimate affection.

If any thing could rouse him from this love-spell, and bring him back to duty and reason, it would be that sudden, unexpected departure; it would be the conviction which would necessarily be impressed upon him, that Josephine desired to be forever separated from him; that she was conscious of being divorced from him forever, and that, in the pride of her insulted womanhood, she wished to withdraw herself and her daughter from his approaches, and from the scandal which his passion for Madame de Gisard was giving.

Such were the reasons with which her relatives, even the grandfather of her two children, sought to persuade her to

a voyage to Martinique—bitter though the anguish would be for them to be deprived of the presence of the gentle, lovely young woman, whose youthful freshness and grace had like sunshine cheered the lonely house in Fontainebleau; to see also part from them the little Hortense, whose joyous voice of childhood had now and then recalled the faithless son to the father's house, and which was still a bond which united Josephine with her husband and with his family.

Josephine had to give way before these arguments, however much her heart bled. She had long felt how much of impropriety and of danger there was in the situation of a young woman divorced from her husband, and how much more dignified and expedient it would be for her to return to her father's home and to the bosom of her family. She therefore took a decided resolution; she tore herself away from her relatives, from her beloved son, whom she could not take with her, for he belonged to the father. With a stream of painful tears she bade farewell to the love of youth, to the joys of youth, from which naught remained but the wounds of a despised heart, and the children who gazed at her with the beloved eyes of their father.

In the month of July of the year 1788, Josephine, with her little five-year-old daughter Hortense, left Fontainebleau, went to Havre, whence she embarked for Martinique.

CHAPTER VII.

LIEUTENANT NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

While the Viscountess Josephine de Beauharnais was, during long years of resignation, enduring all the anguish, humiliations, and agonies of an unhappy marriage, the first pain and sorrow had also clouded the days of the young

Corsican boy who, in the same year as Josephine, had embarked from his native land for France.

In the beginning of the year 1785, Napoleon Bonaparte had lost his father. In Montpellier, whither he had come for the cure of his diseased breast, he died, away from home, from his Letitia and his children. Only his eldest son Joseph stood near his dying couch, and, moreover, a fortunate accident had brought to pass that the poor, lonely sufferer should meet there a friendly home, where he was received with the most considerate affection. Letitia's companion of youth, the beautiful Panonia Comnène, now Madame de Permont, resided in Montpellier with her husband, who was settled there, and with all the faithfulness and friendship of a Corsican, she nursed the sick husband of her Letitia.

But neither the skill of the renowned physicians of Montpellier, nor the tender care of friends, nor the tears of the son, could keep alive the unfortunate Charles de Bonaparte. For three days long he struggled with death; for three days long his youth, his manhood's powers, resisted the mighty foe, which already held him in its chains; then he had to submit to the conqueror. Exhausted with death's pallor, Charles de Bonaparte sank back on his couch, and as Death threw his dark shadows on his face bathed in cold perspiration, Charles de Bonaparte, with stammering tongue, in the last paroxysms of fancy, exclaimed: "It is in vain! Nothing can save me! Even Napoleon's sword, which one day is to triumph over all Europe, even that sword cannot frighten away the dragon of death which crouches on my breast!" *

Wonderful vision of a dying man! The dimmed eye of the dying father saw his son Napoleon's sword, "which one day was to triumph over all Europe;" as he prophesied its power, he sighed at the same time over the impotency

* See "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 29.

which holds all mankind in its bands, and leaves even the hero as a powerless child in the hands of fate. The sword which was to be a yoke to all Europe could not terrify from the breast of his father the dragon of death!

Napoleon received the news of his father's decease whilst at the military school of Paris, where he had been placed for the last six months, to the joy and satisfaction of his teachers as well as to that of his schoolmates in Brienne. For the reserved, taciturn, proud boy, who, rugged and blunt, stood aloof from his comrades, who even dared speak rude and bitter words against his teachers and against the whole military institution at Brienne, was oftentimes an inconvenience and a burden as well to teachers as to schoolmates; and all felt relieved, as from a depressing weight, when they no more feared the flaming eyes of the boy who observed every thing, who criticised every thing, and passed judgment upon every thing.

But if he was not loved, it was impossible to refuse esteem to his capacity, to his desire for learning; and the testimony which Monsieur de Heralio, the principal of the institution of Brienne, sent with the young Napoleon to Paris, was a tribute of respect and an acknowledgment of merit. He portrayed him "as having an extremely capacious head, especially skilled in mathematics, and of great powers and talents." As to his character, one of the professors of the institution had in the testimonial written the remark: "A Corsican by birth and character. He will do great things, if circumstances are favorable."

But circumstances did not appear favorable, but contrariwise seemed to be roused in enmity against the poor Corsican boy. He had been scarcely half a year in Paris when he lost his father, and this grief, of which not a murmur escaped, which he kept within, devouring his heart, as every thing else which affected him, made his existence still more reserved, still more retired, and isolated him more and more.

Moreover, death had not only taken away the father, but also the support which Napoleon received from him. The means of the Bonaparte family were very meagre, and barely sufficed to the support of Signora Letitia and her seven children. Napoleon could not and dared not require or accept any help from his mother, on whom and on his brother Joseph it became incumbent to educate and support the young family. He had to be satisfied to live upon the bounty which the royal treasury furnished to the young men at the military school.

But these limited means were to the ambitious boy a source of humiliation and pain. The majority of his comrades consisted of young aristocrats, who, provided with ample means, led a gay, luxurious, dissipated life, had horses, servants, equipages, kept up one with another expensive dinner-parties and *déjeuners*, and seized every opportunity to organize a festivity or a pleasure-party. Every departure, every admission of a scholar, was celebrated with brilliant display; every birthday furnished the opportunity of a feast, and every holiday became the welcomed occasion for a pleasure excursion which the young men on horseback, and followed by their servants in livery, made in the vicinity of Paris.

Napoleon could take no part in all these feastings and dissipations; and as his proud heart could not acknowledge his poverty, he put on the mask of a stoic, who, with contemptuous disregard, cast away vain pleasures and amusements, and scorned those who with unrestrained zest abandoned themselves to them.

He had scarcely been half a year in the military school when he gave loud expression to his jealousy and envy; the young Napoleon, nearly sixteen years old, undertook boldly to censure in the very presence of the teachers the regulations of the institution. In a memorial which he had composed, and which he presented to the second director of the

establishment, M. Berton, he gave utterance to his own views in the most energetic and daring manner, imposing upon the professors the duty of making a complete change in the institution; of limiting the number of servants, so that the military pupils might learn to wait upon themselves; of simplifying the noonday meal, so as to accustom them to moderation; of forbidding banquets, *déjeuners*, and pleasure-excursions, so that they might not become inured to a frivolous, extravagant mode of life.

This mask of a censuring stoic, which he put on in the presence of teachers and school-mates, he retained also with his few friends. Madame de Permont, a short time after the death of Napoleon's father, came with her family to Paris, where her husband had obtained an important and lucrative office; her son Albert attended the military school and was soon the friend of Napoleon, as much as a friendship could be formed between the young, lively M. de Permont, the son of wealthy and distinguished parents, and the reserved, proud Napoleon Bonaparte, the son of a poor, lonely widow.

However, Napoleon this time acquiesced in the wishes of his true friend, and condescended to pass his holidays with Albert in the house of Madame de Permont, the friend of his mother; and oftentimes his whole countenance would brighten into a smile, when speaking with her of the distant home, of the mother, and of the family. But as many times also that countenance would darken when, gazing round, he tacitly compared this costly, tastefully decorated mansion with the poor and sparingly furnished house in which his noble and beautiful mother lived with her six orphans, and who in her household duties had to wait upon herself; when again he noticed with what solicitude and love Madame de Permont had her children educated by masters from the court, by governesses and by teachers at enormous salaries, whilst her friend Letitia had to content

herself with the very deficient institutions of learning to be found in Corsica, because her means were not sufficient to bring to Paris, to the educational establishment of St. Cyr, her young daughters, like the parents of the beautiful Pauline.

The young Napoleon hated luxury, because he himself had not the means of procuring it; he spoke contemptuously of servants, for his position allowed him not to maintain them; he spoke against the expensive noonday meal, because he had to be content with less; he scorned the amusements of his school-mates, because, when they arranged their picnics and festivities, his purse allowed him not to take a part in them.

One day in the military school, as one of the teachers was to bid it farewell, the scholars organized a festivity, toward which each of them was to contribute a tolerably large sum. It was perhaps not all accident that precisely on that day M. de Permont, the father of Albert, came to the military school to visit his son, and Napoleon, his son's friend.

He found all the scholars in joyous excitement and motion; his son Albert was, like the rest, intently busy with the preparations of the feast, which was to take place in the garden, and to end in a great display of fireworks. All faces beamed with delight, all eyes were illumined, and the whole park re-echoed with jubilant cries and joyous laughter.

But Napoleon Bonaparte was not among the gay company. M. de Permont found him in a remote, lonesome path. He was walking up and down with head bent low, his hands folded behind his back; as he saw M. de Permont, his face became paler and gloomier, and a look nearly scornful met the unwelcomed disturber.

"My young friend," said M. de Permont, with a friendly smile, "I come to bring you the small sum which you need

to enable you to take a part in the festivity. Here it is; take it, I pray you."

But Napoleon, with a vehement movement of the hand, waved back the offered money, a burning redness for a moment covered his face, then his cheeks assumed that yellowish whiteness which in the child had always indicated a violent emotion.

"No," cried he, vehemently, "no, I have nothing to do with this meaningless festivity. I thank you—I receive no alms."

M. de Permont gazed with emotions of sympathizing sorrow in the pale face of the poor young man for whom poverty was preparing so many griefs, and in the generosity of his heart he had recourse to a falsehood.

"This is no alms I offer you, Napoleon," said he, gently, "but this money belongs to you, it comes from your father. At his dying hour he confided to me a small sum of money, with the express charge to keep it for you and to give you a portion of it in pressing circumstances, when your personal honor required it. I therefore bring you to-day the fourth part of this sum, and retain the rest for another pressing occasion."

With a penetrating, searching look, Napoleon gazed into the face of the speaker, and the slight motions of a sarcastic smile played for an instant around his thin, compressed lips.

"Well, then," said he, after a pause, "since this money comes from my father, I can use it; but had you simply wished to lend it to me, I could not have received it. My mother has already too much responsibility and care; I cannot increase them by an outlay, especially when such an outlay is imposed upon me by the sheer folly of my schoolmates." *

* Napoleon's words.—See "Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantes," vol. i., p. 81.

He then took the offered sum for which, as he thought, he was indebted to no man, and hastened to pay his contribution to the festivity. But, in respect to his principles, he took no part in the festivity, but declaimed all the louder, and in a more biting tone, against the criminal propensities for pleasure in the young men who, instead of turning their attention to their studies, lavished away their precious time in dissipation and frivolities.

These anxieties and humiliations of poverty Napoleon had doubly to endure, not only for himself, but also for his sister Marianne (who afterward called herself Elise). She had been, as already said, at her father's intercession and application, received in the royal educational institute of St. Cyr, and there enjoyed the solid and brilliant education of the pupils of the king. But the spirit of luxury and the desire for pleasure had also penetrated into this institution, founded by the pious and high-minded Madame de Maintenon, and the young ladies of St. Cyr had among themselves picnics and festivals, as well as the young men of the military school.

Napoleon, whose means, as long as he was in Brienne, never allowed him to visit his beloved sister at St. Cyr, had now frequent opportunities of seeing her, for Madame de Permont, in her royal friendship to the Bonaparte family, took as lively an interest in the daughter as in the son of her friend Letitia, and often drove to St. Cyr to visit the young and beautiful Marianne.

A few days after the festival in the military school, a short vacation had followed, and Napoleon passed it with his friend Albert in the house of the family of Permont. To please young Napoleon, it was decided to go to St. Cyr, and the glowing cheeks and the lively manner with which Napoleon, during the journey, conversed with M. and Madame de Permont, proved what satisfaction he anticipated in meeting his sister.

But Marianne Bonaparte did not seem to share this satisfaction. With downcast countenance and sad mien she entered the reception-room and saluted M. and Madame Permont, and even her brother, with a gloomy, despairing look. As she was questioned about the cause of her sadness, she broke into tears, and threw herself with vehement emotion into the arms of Madame de Permont.

Vain were the prayers and expostulations of her mother's friend to have her reveal the cause of her sadness. Marianne only shook her head in a negative manner, and ever a fresh flow of tears started from her eyes, but she remained silent.

Napoleon, who at first, pale and silent, had looked on this outbreak of sorrow, now excitedly approached his sister, and, laying his hand upon her arm, said in angry tones: "Since you cry, you must also confess the cause of your tears, or else we are afraid that you weep over some wrong of which you are guilty. But woe to you if it is so! I am here in the name of our father, and I will be without pity!"*

Marianne trembled, and cast a timid, anxious look upon her young brother, whose voice had assumed such a peculiar, imperious expression—whose eyes shone with the expression of a proud, angry master.

"I am in no wise guilty, my brother," murmured she, "and yet I am sad and unhappy."

And blushing, trembling, with broken words, interrupted by tears and sighs, Marianne related that next day, a farewell festival was to take place in the institution in honor of one of the pupils about to leave. The whole class was taking a part in it, and each of the young ladies had already paid her contribution.

"But I only am not able," exclaimed Marianne, with a

* "Mémoires de la Duchesse d'Abrantes."

loud burst of anguish, "I have but six francs; if I give them, nothing is left me, and my pension is not paid until six weeks. But even were I to give all I have, my miserable six francs would not be enough."

Very unwillingly indeed had Napoleon, whilst Marianne thus spoke, put his hand into his pocket, as if to draw out the money which his sorrowing sister needed, but remembering his own poverty, his hand dropped at his side; a deep glow of anger overspread his cheeks, and wildly stamping down with the foot he turned away and walked to the window, perhaps to allow none to notice the nervous agitation of his countenance and his tears of vexation and shame.

But what Napoleon could not do, that did Madame de Permont. She gave to the weeping young girl the twelve francs she needed to take a part in the festivity, and Marianne, less proud and less disdainful than her brother, accepted gladly, without opposition and without the need of a falsehood, the little sum offered.

Napoleon allowed this to take place without contradiction, and hindered not his sister to receive from Madame de Permont the alms which he himself had so arrogantly refused.

But they had barely left the reception-room and entered the carriage, than his suffering heart burst into a sarcastic philippic against the contemptible administration of such royal establishments as St. Cyr and the military school.

M. de Permont, who had at first patiently and with a smile listened to these raving invectives, felt himself at last wounded by them; and the supercilious and presumptuous manner in which the young man of barely seventeen years spoke of the highest offices of the state, and of the king himself, excited his anger.

"Hush, Napoleon!" said he, reluctantly. "It does not

beseem you, who are educated upon the king's bounty, to speak thus."

Napoleon shrank within himself as if he had been bitten by a serpent, and a deadly pallor overspread his cheeks.

"I am not the pupil of the king, but of the state!" exclaimed he, in a boisterous voice, trembling with passion.

"Ah, that is indeed a fine distinction which you have made there, Napoleon," said M. de Permont, laughing. "It is all the same whether you are the pupil of the state or of the king; moreover, is not the king the state also? However it may be, it beseems you not to speak of your benefactor in such inappropriate terms."

Napoleon concentrated all his efforts into self-control, and mastered himself into a grave, quiet countenance.

"I will be silent," said he, with an appearance of composure; "I will no more say what might excite your displeasure. Only allow me to say, were I master here, had I to decide upon the regulations of these institutions, I would have them very different, and for the good of all."

"Were I master here!" The pupil of the military school, for whom poverty was preparing so much humiliation, who had just now experienced a fresh humiliation through his sister in the reception-room of St. Cyr, was already thinking what he would do were he the ruler of France; and, strange enough, these words seemed natural to his lips, and no one thought of sneering or laughing at him when he thus spoke.

Meanwhile his harsh and repulsive behavior, his constant fault-finding and censoriousness were by no means conducive to the friendship and affection of those around him; he was a burden to all, he was an inconvenience to all; and the teachers as well as the pupils of the military school were all anxious to get rid of his presence.

As nothing else could be said to his reproach; as there was no denying his assiduity, his capacities, and progress,

there was but one means of removing him from the institution—he had to be promoted. It was necessary to recognize the young pupil of the military school as competent to enter into the practical, active military service; it was necessary to make a lieutenant out of the pupil.

Scarcely had one year passed since Napoleon had been received into the military school of Paris, when he was nominated by the authorities of the school for a vacancy in the rank of lieutenant, and he was promoted to it in the artillery regiment of La Fère, then stationed at Valence.

In the year 1786 Napoleon left the military school to serve his country and his king as second lieutenant, and to take the oath of allegiance.

Radiant with happiness and joy, proud alike of his promotion and of his uniform, the young lieutenant went to the house of M. de Permont to show himself to his friends in his new dignity and in his new splendors, and, at their invitation, to pass a few days in their house before leaving for Valence.

But, alas! his appearance realized not the wished-for result. As he entered the saloon of Madame de Permont the whole family was gathered there, and at the sight of Napoleon the two daughters, girls of six and thirteen years, broke out into loud laughter. None are more alive than children to the impression of what is ridiculous, and there was indeed in the appearance of the young lieutenant something which well might excite the laughing propensities of the lively little maidens. The uniform appeared much too long and wide for the little meagre figure of Napoleon, and his slender legs vanished in boots of such height and breadth that he seemed more to swim than to walk with them.

These boots especially had excited the laughter of the little maidens; and at every step which Napoleon, embarrassed as he was by the terrible cannon-boots, made for-

ward, the laughter only increased, so that the expostulations and reproaches of Madame de Permont could not procure silence.

Napoleon, who had entered the drawing-room with a face radiant with joy, felt wounded by the children's joyousness at his own cost. To be the subject of scorn or sarcasm was then, as it was afterward, entirely unbearable to him, and when he himself also tried to jest he knew not how to receive the jests directed at him. After having saluted M. and Madame de Permont, Napoleon turned to the eldest daughter Cecilia, who, a few days before, had come from the boarding-school to remain a short time at home, and who, laughing, had placed herself right before monsieur the lieutenant.

"I find your laughter very silly and childish," said he, eagerly.

The young maid, however, continued to laugh.

"M. Lieutenant," said she, "since you carry such a mighty sword, you no doubt wish to carry it as a lady's knight, and therefore you must consider it an honor when ladies jest with you."

Napoleon gave a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders.

"It is evident," said he, scornfully, "that you are but a little school-girl."

These sarcastic words wounded the vanity of the young maiden, and brought a glow of anger on her face.

"Well, yes," cried she, angrily, "I am a school-girl, but you—you are nothing else than a puss in boots!"

A general laugh followed; even Madame de Permont, ordinarily so good and so considerate, could not suppress laughter. The witty words of the little school-girl were too keen and too applicable that she should be subjected to reproach.

Napoleon's wrath was indescribable. His visage was overspread with a yellow-greenish pallor, his lips were con-

tracted nervously, and already opened for a word of anger. But he suppressed that word with an effort; for though not yet familiar with all the forms and usages of society, his fine tact and the instinct of what was becoming told him that when the conversation ran into personalities the best plan was to be silent, and that he must not return personal remarks, since his opponent was one of the fair sex. He therefore remained silent, and so controlled himself as to join in the general laughter and to show himself heartily amused at the unfortunate nickname of the little Cecilia.

And that every one might be convinced how much he himself had been amused at this little scene, he brought, a a few days afterward, to the youngest daughter of Madame de Permont, a charming little toy which he had had made purposely for her. This toy consisted of a small gilt and richly-ornamented carriage of *papier-maché*, before which leaped along a very lovely puss in boots.

To this present for the little Lolotte (afterward Duchess d'Abrantes), was added for Cecilia an elegant and interesting edition of the tales of "Puss in Boots," and when Napoleon politely presented it to the young maid he begged her to receive kindly this small souvenir from him.

"That is too much," said Madame de Permont, shaking her head. "The toy for Loulou would have been quite enough. But this present to Cecilia shows that you took her jest in earnest, and were hurt by it."

Napoleon, however, affirmed that he had not taken the jest in earnest, that he had been no wise hurt by it; that he himself when he put on his uniform had to laugh at the nickname of "puss in boots" which dear Cecilia had given him.

He had, however, endeavored no more to deserve this nickname, and the unlucky boots were replaced by much smaller and closer-fitting ones.

A few days after this little incident the young second lieutenant left Paris and went to meet his regiment La Fère at Valence.

A life of labor and study, of hopes and dreams, now began for the young lieutenant. He gave himself up entirely to his military service, and pursued earnest, scientific studies in regard to it. Mathematics, the science of war, geometry, and finally politics, were the objects of his zeal; but alongside of these he read and studied earnestly the works of Voltaire, Corneille, Racine, Montaigne, the Abbé Raynal, and, above all, the works of Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose passionate and enthusiastic disciple Napoleon Bonaparte was at that time.*

Amid so many grave occupations of the mind it would seem that the heart with all its claims had to remain in the background. The smiling boy Cupid, with his gracious raillery and his smarting griefs, seemed to make no impression on that pale, grave, and taciturn artillery lieutenant, and not to dare shoot an arrow toward that bosom which had mailed itself in an impenetrable cuirass of misanthropy, stoicism, and learning.

But yet between the links of this coat-of-mail an arrow must have glided, for the young lieutenant suddenly became conscious that there in his bosom a heart did beat, and that it was going in the midst of his studies to interrupt his dreams of misanthropy. Yes, it had come to this, that he abandoned his study to pay his court to a young lady, that at her side he lost his gravity of mien, his gloomy taciturnity, and became joyous, talkative, and merry, as beseemed a young man of his age.

The young lady who exercised so powerful an influence upon the young Bonaparte was the daughter of the commanding officer at Valence, M. de Colombier. He loved

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 33.

her, but his lips were yet too timid to confess it, and of what need were words to these young people to understand one another and to know what the one felt for the other?

In the morning they took long walks through the beautiful park; they spoke one to another of their childhood, of their brothers and sisters, and when the young maid with tears in her eyes listened to the descriptions which Napoleon made to her of his country, of his father's house, and, above all things, of his mother—when she with animation and enthusiasm declared that Letitia was a heroine greater than whom antiquity had never seen, then Napoleon would take her two hands in his and thank her with tremulous voice for the love which she consecrated to his noble mother.

If in the morning they had to separate, as an indemnification an evening walk in the light of the moon was agreed upon, and the young maid promised heroically to come without uncertainty, however imperative was her mother's prohibition. And truly, when her mother was asleep, she glided down into the park, and Napoleon welcomed her with a happy smile, and arm in arm, happy as children, they wandered through the paths, laughing at their own shadows, which the light of the moon in wondrous distortion made to dance before them. They entered into a small bower, which stood in the shadow of trees, and there the young Napoleon had prepared for the young maid a very pleasing surprise. There on the table was a basket full of her favorite fruit—full of the sweetest, finest cherries. Louise thanked her young lover with a hand-pressure for the tender attention, but she declared that she would touch none of the cherries unless Napoleon enjoyed them with her, and to please his beloved he had to obey.

They sat down on the seat before the bower and enjoyed the golden light of the moon, the night air amid the lime-trees, the joy of being thus secretly together, and with infinite delight they ate of the sweet juicy cherries. But when

the last cherry was eaten, the moon became darkened, a rude night breeze shook the trees, and made the young maid tremble with cold. She must not remain from home any longer, she must not expose herself to the dangerous night air; thus argued the considerate tenderness of the young lieutenant, and, kissing her hand, he bade farewell to Louise, and watched until the tender ethereal figure had vanished behind the little door which led from the park into the house.*

The sweet idyl of his first love had, however, come to a sudden and unexpected end. The young Second-Lieutenant Bonaparte was ordered to Lyons with his regiment, and the first innocent romance of his heart was ended.

But he never forgot the young maid, whom he then had so tenderly loved, and in the later days of his grandeur he remembered her, and when he learned that she had lost her husband, a M. de Bracieux, and lived in very depressing circumstances, he appointed her maid of honor to his sister Elise, and secured her a very handsome competency.

The dream of his first love had been dreamed away; and, perhaps to forget it, Napoleon again in Lyons gave himself up with deepest earnestness to study. The Academy of Sciences in Lyons had offered a prize for the answer to the question: "What are the sentiments and emotions which are to be instilled into men, so as to make them happy?"

Napoleon entered the lists for this prize, and, if his work did not receive the prize, it furnished the occasion for the Abbé Raynal, who had answered the question successfully, to become acquainted with the young author, and to encourage him to persevere in his literary pursuits, for which he had exhibited so much talent.

Napoleon then, with all the fire of his soul, began a new

* "Mémorial de St. Helène," p. 30.

work, the history of the revolutions in Corsica; and, in order to make accurate researches in the archives of Ajaccio, he obtained leave of absence to go thither. In the year 1788, Napoleon returned to his native isle to his mother, to his brothers and sisters, all of whom he had not seen for nine years, and was welcomed by them with the tenderest affection.

But the joys of the family could draw away the young man but little from his studies and researches; and, however much he loved his mother, brothers and sisters, now much grown up, yet he preferred being alone with his elder brother Joseph, making long walks with him, and in solemn exchange of thoughts and sentiments, communicating to him his studies, his hopes, his dreams for the future.

To acquire distinction, fame, reputation with the actual world, and immortality with the future—such was the object on which all the wishes, all the hopes of Napoleon were concentrated; and in long hours of conversation with Joseph he spoke of the lofty glory to carve out an immortal name, to accomplish deeds before which admiring posterity would bow.

Did Napoleon then think of purchasing for himself an immortal name as writer, as historian? At least he studied very earnestly the archives of Ajaccio, and sent a preliminary essay of his history of the revolutions of Corsica to Raynal for examination. This renowned savant of his day warmly congratulated the young author on his work, and asked him to send a copy that he might show it to Mirabeau.

Napoleon complied with these wishes; and when, a few weeks after, he received a letter from Raynal, after reading it, he, with radiant eyes and a bright smile, handed it to his brother Joseph.

In this letter of Raynal were found these words: "Monsieur de Mirabeau has in this little essay found traits which

announce a genius of the first rank. He entreats the young author to come to him in Paris."*

But the young author could not at once obey the call of the Count de Mirabeau. A sad family bereavement delayed him at the time in Corsica. The brother of his grandfather, the aged Archdeacon Lucian, the faithful counsellor and friend of Letitia and of her young family, was seized with a mortal disease; the gout, which for years had tormented him, was now to give him the fatal blow, and the whole family of the Bonapartes was called to the bedside of the old man to receive his parting words.

Weeping, they all stood around his couch; weeping, Letitia bent over the aged man, whose countenance was already signed with the hand of death. Around kneeled the younger children of Letitia, for their great-uncle had long been to them a kind father and protector; and on the other side of the couch, facing Letitia and her brother, the Abbé Fesch, stood Joseph and Napoleon, gazing with sad looks on their uncle.

His large, already obscured eyes wandered with a deep, searching glance upon all the members of the Bonaparte family, and then at last remained fixed with a wondrous brilliancy of expression on the pale, grave face of Napoleon.

At this moment, the Abbé Fesch, with a voice trembling with emotion and full of holy zeal, began to intone the prayers for the dead. But the old priest ordered him with a voice full of impatience to be silent.

"I have prayed long enough in my life," said he; "I have now but a few moments to live, and I must give them to my family."

The loud sobbings of Letitia and of her children interrupted him, and called forth a last genial smile upon the already stiffening features.

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 33.

"Letitia," said he, in a loud, friendly tone, "Letitia, cease to shed tears; I die happy, for I see you surrounded by all your children. My life is no longer necessary to the children of my dear Charles; I can therefore die. Joseph is at the head of the administration of the country, and he will know how to take care of what belongs to his family. You, Napoleon," continued he, with a louder voice, "you will be a great and exalted man." *

His eyes turned on Napoleon, he sank back on the cushions, and his dying lips murmured yet once more, "*Tu serai unomone!*"

After the body of the worthy great-uncle had been laid in the grave, Napoleon left Corsica to return to France and to his regiment, for the time of his leave of absence had expired.

For the second time the lips of a dying man had prophesied him a great and brilliant future. His dying father had said that one day the sword of his son Napoleon would make all Europe bow under the yoke; his great-uncle had prophesied he would be a great and exalted personage.

To these prophecies of the dying is to be added Mirabeau's judgment, which called Napoleon a genius of the first stamp.

But this great and glorious future was yet screened under dark clouds from the eyes of the young lieutenant of artillery, and the blood-dripping hand of the Revolution was first needed to tear away these clouds and to convert the king's lieutenant of artillery into the Emperor of France!

* "*Tu poi; Napoleon, serai unomone,*" such were the words of the dying man, assures us King Joseph in his memoirs; whilst Las Casas, in his memorial of St. Helena, makes Napoleon relate that his uncle had told him, "You, Napoleon, will be the head of the family."

CHAPTER VIII.

A PAGE FROM HISTORY.

The dark clouds which hung yet over the future of Napoleon Bonaparte, the lieutenant of artillery, were gathering in heavier and heavier masses over all France, and already were overshadowing the throne of the lilies.

Marie Antoinette had already abandoned the paradise of innocency in Trianon, and when she came there now it was to weep in silence, to cast away the mask from her face, and under the garb of the proud, imperious, ambitious queen to exhibit the pallid, anxious countenance of the woman.

Alas! they were passed away, those days of festivity, those innocent joys of Trianon; the royal farmer's wife had no more the heart to carry the spindle, to gather eggs from the hens' nests, and to perform with her friends the joyous idyls of a pastoral life.

The queen had procured for herself a few years of freedom and license by banishing from Versailles and from the Tuileries the burdensome Madame Etiquette, who hitherto had watched over every step of a Queen of France, but in her place Madame Politique had entered into the palace, and Marie Antoinette could not drive her away as she had done with Madame Etiquette.

For Madame Politique came into the queen's apartments, ushered in by a powerful and irresistible suite. The failure of the crops throughout the land, want, the cries of distress from a famishing people, the disordered finances of the state—such was the suite which accompanied Politique before the queen; pamphlets, pasquinades, sarcastic songs on Marie Antoinette, whom no more the people called their queen, but already the foreigner, *L'Autrichienne*—such were the gifts which Politique brought for the queen.

The beautiful and innocent days of Trianon were gone no longer could Marie Antoinette forget that she was a queen! The burden of her lofty position pressed upon her always; and, if now and then she sought to adorn her head with roses, her crown pressed their thorns with deeper pain into her brow.

Unfortunate queen! Even the circle of friends she had gathered round her person only urged her on more and more into the circle which politics had traced around her. In her innocency and thoughtlessness of heart she imagined that, to a queen as to any other woman, it might be allowed to have about her friends and confidants, to enjoy the pleasures of society, and to amuse one another! But now she had to learn that a queen dare not have confidants, friends, or social circles!

Her friends, in whose disinterestedness she had trusted, approached her with demands, with prayers; they claimed power, influence, and distinctions; they all wanted to rule through the queen; they all wanted through her to impose laws to king and state; they wanted to name and to depose ministers; they wanted their friendship to be rewarded with embassies, ministerial offices, decorations, and titles.

And when Marie Antoinette refused compliance with their wishes, her beautiful friends, the Duchesses de Polignac, wept, and her friends, Messieurs Vesenval, Vaudreuil, Coigny, and Polignac, dared be angry and murmur at her.

But when Marie Antoinette consented—when she used her influence with the king, to satisfy the wishes of her friends, and to make ministers of her *façon*—then the queen's enemies, with loud, mad-dog cry, lifted up the voice and complained and clamored that it was no more the king but the queen who reigned; that she was the one who precipitated the nation into wretchedness and want; that she gave millions to her friends, whilst the people were perishing with hunger; that she sent millions to her brother, the

Emperor of Austria, whilst the country was only able to pay the interest of her enormous debt; that she, in unrestrained appetite and licentiousness, lived only for pleasure and festivities, whilst France was depressed under misery and want.

And the queen's enemies were mightier, more numerous, and more loyal one to another than the queen's friends, who were ever ready to pass into the camp of her foes as soon as Marie Antoinette gratified not their wishes and would not satisfy their political claims.

At the head of these enemies was the king's brother, the Count de Provence, who never forgave the queen for being an Austrian princess; there were also the king's aunts, who could never forgive her that the king loved her, that by means of this love to his wife they should lose the influence which these aunts, and especially Madame Adelaide, had before exercised over him; there was the Duke d'Orleans, who had to revenge himself for the disgust and dislike which Marie Antoinette publicly expressed against this vicious and wild prince; there was the Cardinal Prince de Rohan, whose criminal passion the queen had repelled with contemptuous disgust, and who had paid for this passion one million francs, with imprisonment, shame, and ridicule. For this passion for the queen had blinded the cardinal, and made him believe in the possibility of a return. In his blindness he had placed confidence in the whisperings and false promises of the insidious intriguer Madame de la Motte-Valois, who, in the queen's name, asked from him a loan of a million for the purchase of a jewelled ornament which highly pleased the queen, and which she, notwithstanding her exhausted coffers, was resolved to possess.

Yes, love had blinded Cardinal de Rohan, and with blind eyes he had accepted as letters from the queen those which Madame de la Motte brought him; and he could not see that the person who gave him a rendezvous in the gar-

dens of Versailles was not the queen, but only a common, vicious woman, who had been clothed in the queen's garments.

The queen had been travestied into a wench, and the highest ecclesiastical dignitary of the land was the one who took this wench for his queen, was the one who, with a rendezvous, a kiss on the hand, and a rose, was rewarded for the million he had given to the jeweller for a necklace of diamonds!

It is true, the deception was discovered; it is true, it was Marie Antoinette herself who asked for a strict investigation, who with tears of anger required from her consort that this horrible intrigue which had been woven round her person should be investigated and judged publicly before the Parliament; that the Cardinal de Rohan should be punished for the criminal insult offered by him to the queen, since he thought her capable of granting him a rendezvous, of exchanging with him letters of tender passion, and of accepting gifts from him!

But the Parliament, which recognized the guilt of Madame de la Motte, which ordered her to be whipped, branded, and driven out of the country as an impostor and a thief, the Parliament declared the Cardinal de Rohan innocent; all punishments were removed from him, and he was re-established in all his dignities and rights. And the people, who in enormous masses had besieged the Parliament buildings, welcomed this decision of the judges with loud demonstrations and shouts of joy, and carried the cardinal in triumph through the streets, and honored and glorified him as a martyr and a saint.

This triumph of the cardinal was an affecting defeat to the queen; it was the first awful testimony, spoken loudly and openly, by the popular sentiment.

Hitherto her enemies had worked against her quietly, and in the darkness of night; but now, in open day, they

dared launch against her their terrible accusations, and represent her imprudence as a crime, her errors as shameful and premeditated wickedness. No one believed in the queen's innocency in this necklace transaction; and whereas Cardinal de Rohan had been made a martyr, whereas Parliament had declared him innocent, the queen consequently must be the guilty one, to whose cupidity the cardinal and the unfortunate Madame de la Motte and also the beautiful D'Olivia, who in this horrible farce had played the part of the queen, had been sacrificed.

The name, the character, the reputation of the queen, had been trodden down in the dust, and the Count de Provence, who himself composed sarcastic songs and *pasquinades* against his royal sister-in-law, and had copies of them circulated through the court, reflected not that in calumniating the queen and exposing her to the scorn and ridicule of the world he thereby shook the throne itself, and imperilled the awe and respect which the people should have had for the monarchy. And all the other mighty dignitaries and foes of Marie Antoinette did not calculate that in exciting the storm of calumny against the Queen of France, they also attacked the king and the aristocracy, and tore down the barrier which hitherto had stood between the people and the nobility.

Hitherto pamphlets and sarcastic songs only had been directed against the queen; but now, in the year 1787, all France was to re-echo a pamphlet launched against the nobility and the whole aristocracy.

This pamphlet was "The Wedding of Figaro," by Beaumarchais. The habits of the aristocracy, of the higher classes, were in this drama castigated and thrown to the scorn, ridicule, and laughter of all France. Every thing which the people hitherto had held sacred, was laughed at in this drama; all the laws of manners, of rank, of morality, were scorned at, hissed at; and, under this hissing, appeared

in full view and with fearful veracity the rotten and poisoned condition of the so-called upper classes of society.

It was in vain that the censor declared the publication illegal, and prohibited the representation of "The Wedding of Figaro." The opposition took advantage of this measure, and since it could not be published, hundreds of copies were circulated; and, if it could not be represented, its reading was listened to. It soon became fashionable to attend at the readings of "Figaro's Wedding" and to possess a copy of the drama. Even in the queen's social circle, in the circle of the Polignacs, this dangerous drama was patronized, and even the queen was requested to use her influence upon the king for its representation.

This general clamor, this tempest of the public opinion, excited even the king's curiosity; and as everybody attended the readings of Beaumarchais' drama, the crowned heads had also to bow to the fashion. Madame de Campan had to read before the king and the queen this renowned "Wedding of Figaro," so that the king might give his decision. The good-natured countenance of the king darkened more and more, and during Figaro's monologue, in which the different institutions of the state are ridiculed, especially when, with words full of poison and scorn, the author alludes to state-prisons, the king rose angrily from his seat.

"It is a contemptible thing," cried he, vehemently. "The Bastile must be destroyed before the representation of this piece would not appear as a dangerous inconsequence. This man ridicules every thing which in a state ought to be esteemed and respected."

"This piece will not then be represented?" asked Marie Antoinette, at the close of the reading.

"No, certainly not!" exclaimed Louis, "you can be convinced of it; this piece will not be represented."

But the clamor, the longings for this representation were

more and more loudly expressed, and more and more pressing. It was in vain that the king by his decree forbade its already-announced representation in the theatre of the *menus plaisirs*. Beaumarchais cried aloud to the murmuring audience, who complained very loudly against this tyranny, against this oppression of the king, the consoling words: "Well, sirs, the king desires that my drama be not represented here, but I swear that it will be represented, perhaps even in the chancel of Notre Dame."

It was soon apparent that Beaumarchais' words and the wishes of the public opinion were stronger than the words and the wishes of the king and of his highest officers. The king himself felt it and acknowledged it soon; he shrugged his shoulders compassionately when the chancellor of the seal, adhering still to his opposition, would by no means consent to the performance of the drama.

"You will see," said Louis, with his own soft, good-natured smile—"you will see that Beaumarchais' credit is better than that of the great-seal bearer." *

The king's prophecy was correct—Beaumarchais had more credit than the chancellor! His powerful patrons in high places, and all those who made opposition to the king and queen, and at their head the Count de Provence, banded together to have this piece publicly represented. The king's consent was elicited from him by the assurance made public that Beaumarchais had stricken out of his drama all the offensive and captious parts, and that it was now a mere innocent and somewhat tedious piece.

The king gave his consent, and "The Wedding of Figaro" was represented at the *Théâtre Français*.

The effect of this drama on the public was a thing unheard of; so enthusiastic that Beaumarchais himself laughingly said: "There is something yet more foolhardy than

* "Mémoires de Madame de Campan," vol. i., p. 279.

my piece, and that is, its result"—that the renowned actress Sophie Arnold, in allusion to this, that the opponents of this drama had prophesied that it would fall through, exclaimed: "The piece will fall through to-day more than fifty times one after another!"

But even this prophecy of the actress did not reach the full result, and the sixtieth representation was as crowded as the first. All Paris wanted to see it, so as to hiss the government, the nobility, clergy, morality. There was a rush from the provinces to Paris for the sake of attending the representation of "Figaro's Wedding;" and even those who hitherto had opposed the performance, pressed forward to see it.

One day Beaumarchais received a letter from the Duke de Villequier, asking of him as a favor to give up for that evening his trellised box in behalf of some ladies of the court, who desired to see "Figaro" without being seen.

Beaumarchais answered: "My lord duke, I have no respect for ladies who desire to see a performance which they consider improper, and who wish to see it under cover. I cannot stoop to such fancies. I have given my piece to the public to amuse and not to instruct them, not to procure to tamed wenches (*bégueules mitigées*) the satisfaction of thinking well of the piece in a small trellised box, and then to say all manner of evil against it in public. The pleasure of vice and the honors of virtue, that is what the prudery of our age demands. My piece is not double-faced. It must be accepted or repelled. I salute you, my lord duke, and keep my box."*

All Paris chuckled over this letter, which was circulated in hundreds of copies, as the drama itself had circulated at first. Every one was convinced that it was the queen who wanted to attend the representation of "Figaro" in the

* "Correspondance de Diderot et Grimm avec un Souverain."

trellised box; for it was well known that the queen, angry at monsieur for having been present with all his suite at a representation in the box reserved for the court, had openly declared: "Could she come to the conclusion of seeing this drama, she would only see it through a small trellised box, and that without any ceremony."

In laughing at the letter of Beaumarchais, the ridicule was directed against the queen, who had been refused in so shameful a manner. But Marie Antoinette did not wish to be laughed at. She still hoped to overcome her enemies, and to win the public sentiment. She requested an investigation, she insisted that the Duke de Villequier should openly acknowledge for whom among the ladies of the court he had asked for the box; that Beaumarchais should publicly confess that he had not dared suppose his words were directed against the queen.

The whole matter was brought to an end by an arbitrary decree. Beaumarchais was compelled publicly to acknowledge that his famous letter was directed neither to a duke nor to a peer, but to one of his friends, whose strange request he had thus answered in the first flush of anger. But it is evident no one believed in this explanation, and every one felt pleasure in referring to the queen the expression of "*bégueule mitigée.*"

Paris, which for a whole winter had laughed at a theatrical piece, and was satiated with it, was now to assist at the first scene of a drama whose tragical power and force were to tear France asunder, and whose continuance was to be marked by blood and tears.

This important drama, whose opening followed closely Beaumarchais' drama, exhibited its first scene at Versailles at the opening of the States-General on the 5th of May, 1789. All Paris, all France watched this event as the rise of a new sun, of a new era which was to break upon France and bring her happiness, salvation, and strength. A new,

an unsuspected power entered with it upon the scene, the *Tiers Etat*; the third class was, at the opening of the States-General, solemnly recognized as a third power, alongside of the nobility and clergy. With the third class, the people and the yeomen entered into the king's palace; one-half of the people were to make the laws instead of having to submit to them.

It was Marie Antoinette who had endeavored with all her influence on the king that the third class, hitherto barely recognized, barely tolerated, should appear in a two-fold stronger representation at the States-General; it was the queen also who had requested Necker's recall. Unfortunate woman, who bowed both pride and will to the wishes of public opinion, who yet hoped to succeed in winning again the people's love, since she endeavored to meet the wishes of the people!

But this love had turned away from her forever; and whatever Marie Antoinette might now do to exhibit her candid wishes, her devotedness was not trusted in by the people, who looked upon her as an enemy, no longer Queen of France, but simply an Austrian.

Even on this day of universal joy, on the day of the opening of the States-General, there was no desire to hide from the queen the hatred felt against her, but there was the resolve to show her that France, even in her hour of happiness, ceased not to make opposition to her.

The opening of the States-General was to be preceded in Versailles by divine service. In solemn procession the deputies arrived; and the people who had streamed from Paris and from the whole region round about, and who in compact masses filled the immense square in front of the palace, and the whole street leading to the Church of St. Louis, received the deputies with loud, unbroken shouts, and met the princes and the king with applause. But no sooner was the queen in sight, than the people remained dumb; and then,

after this appalling pause, which petrified the heart of the queen, the women with their true instinct of hatred began to cry out, "Long live the Duke d'Orleans! Long live the people's friend, the good Duke d'Orleans!"

The name of the duke thus derisively thrown in the face of the queen—for it was well known that she hated him, that she had forbidden him to enter into her apartments—this name at this hour, thrown at her by the people, struck the queen's heart as the blow of a dagger; a deathly pallor overspread her cheeks, and nearly fainting she had to throw herself into the arms of the Princess de Lamballe, so as not to sink down.*

With the opening of the States-General, as already said, began the first act of the great drama which France was going to represent before the eyes of Europe terrified and horrified: with the opening of the States-General the revolution had begun. Every one felt it; every one knew it; the first man who had the courage to express it was Mirabeau—Mirabeau, the deputy of the Third Estate, the count who was at enmity with all those of his rank, who had solemnly parted with them to devote himself to the people's service and to liberty!

On the day of the opening, as he entered the hall in which the States-General were convened, he gazed with scrutinizing and flaming eyes on the representatives of the nobility, on those brilliant and proud lords who, though his equals in rank, were now his inveterate enemies. A proud, disdainful smile fluttered athwart his lips, which ordinarily were pressed together with a sarcastic and contemptuous expression. He then crossed the hall with the bearing of a conqueror, and took his seat upon those benches from which was launched the thunderbolt which was to dash to pieces the throne of the lilies.

* See "Count Mirabeau," by Theodore Mundt. Second edition, vol. iii., p. 224.

A long-tried friend, who was also a friend of the government and of the nobility, had seen this look of hatred and anger which Mirabeau had cast upon the gallery of the aristocrats; he now approached Mirabeau to salute him, and perhaps to pave a way of reconciliation between the prodigal Count de Mirabeau and his associates in rank.

"Think," said he, "my friend, that society is not to be won by threats, but by flatteries; that, when once injured, it is difficult to effect a reconciliation. You have been unjust toward society, and if you look for forgiveness you must not be obstinate, but you must stoop to ask for pardon."

Mirabeau had listened with impatience, but at the word "pardon," his anger broke with terrible force. He sprang up, stamped violently on the floor with his feet; his hair which, like a lion's mane, mantled his head, seemed to bristle up, his little eyes darted flashes, and his lips were blanched and trembling, and with a thundering voice he exclaimed: "I am not here to implore pardon for myself, but that others should sue for mercy."

Was Mirabeau himself willing to grant pardon? Had he come with a reconciling heart into this assembly, where people and king were to measure their rights one against the other?

As the good King Louis this day entered the hall, in all the pomp of his royal dignity, to welcome the States-General with a solemn address, Mirabeau's eyes were fixed on him: "Behold the victim," said he.*

From this day the struggle began—the struggle of the monarchy against the revolution, of the liberal party against the reaction, the struggle of the people against the aristocracy, against every thing which hitherto had been legitimate, welcomed, and sacred!

* Theodore Mundt: "Graf Mirabeau," vol. iv., p. 15.

A new day had broken in, and the prophetic mind of the queen understood that with it came the storm which was to scatter into fragments her happiness and her peace.

CHAPTER IX.

JOSEPHINE'S RETURN.

To rest!—to forget! This was what Josephine sought for in Martinique, and what she found in the circle of her friends. She wanted to rest from the pains and struggles which had agitated the last years of her life. She wanted to forget that she still loved the Viscount de Beauharnais, though rejected and accused, though he had treacherously abandoned her for the sake of another woman.

But he was the father of her children, and there was Hortense with her large blue eyes and her noble, lovely countenance to remind Josephine of the father to whom Hortense bore so close a resemblance. Josephine's tender-heartedness would not suffer the innocent, childish heart of Hortense to become alienated from her father, or to forget the esteem and respect which as a daughter she owed to him. Josephine therefore never allowed any one to utter a word of blame against her husband in the presence of her daughter; she even imposed silence on her mother when, in the just resentment of a parent who sees her child suffer, she accused the man who had brought wretchedness on her Josephine, who at so early an age had taught her life's sorrows.

How joyous, beautiful, happy had her Josephine nearly ten years ago left her home, her country, her family, to go to a foreign land which attracted her with every thing which can charm a young girl—with the love of a young and beau-

tiful husband—with the luxury, the pleasures and festivities of Paris!

And now after ten years Josephine returned to her father's home, lonely, abandoned, unhappy, blighted with the mildew which ever deteriorates the character of a divorced woman; yet so young, with so many ruined hopes, with so many wounds in the heart!

Josephine's mother could not pardon him all this, and her countenance became clouded whenever the little Hortense spoke of her father. And the child spoke of him so often—for each evening and morning she had to pray God in his behalf—and when she asked her mother where her brother Eugene was, why he had not come with them to Martinique, Josephine answered her, he had remained with his father, who loved him so much, and who must have at least one of his children with him.

"Why then can he not, with Eugene, be with us?" asked the little Hortense, thoughtfully. "Why does he remain in that hateful, stony Paris, whilst he could live with us in the beautiful garden where so many charming flowers and so many large trees are to be found? Why is papa not with us, mamma?"

"Because he has occupations—because he cannot leave his regiment, my child," answered Josephine, carefully hiding her tears.

"If he cannot come to us, mamma, then let us go to him," cried the loving child. "Come, mamma, let us go on board a ship, and let us go to our dear papa, and to my dear brother Eugene."

"We must wait until your father sends for us, until he writes that we must come," said Josephine, with a sad smile. "Pray to God, my child, that he may soon do it!"

And from this time the child prayed God every evening that her father would soon send for her mother and for herself; and whenever she saw her mother receive a letter she

said: "Is it a letter from my papa? Does he write for us to travel and to come to him?"

One day Josephine was enabled to answer this question to her daughter with a proud and joyous yes.

Yes, the Viscount de Beauharnais had begged his wife to forget the past, and to come back to him. He had, with all the contrition of penitence, with the glow of an awakening love, prayed for pardon; he requested from her large-heartedness to be once more reunited to him who had despised, calumniated, and rejected her; he swore with sacred oaths to love her alone, and to keep to her in unbroken faithfulness.

At first Josephine received these vows with a suspicious, sorrowful smile; the wounds of her heart were not yet healed, the bitter experiences of the past were yet too fresh in her mind; and Madame de la Pagerie, Josephine's mother, repelled with earnestness every thought of reconciliation and reunion. She did not wish to lose her daughter a second time, and see her go to meet a dubious and dangerous happiness; she did not wish that Josephine, barely returned to the haven of rest and peace, should once more risk herself on the open, tempestuous ocean of life.

But the letters of the viscount were more and more pressing, more and more tender. He had completely and forever broken with Madame de Gisard; he did not wish to see her again, and henceforth he desired to be the true, devoted husband of his Josephine.

Josephine read these assurances, these vows of love, with a joyous smile, with a beating heart: all the crushed flowers of her youth raised up their blossoms again in her heart; she began again to hope, to trust, to believe once more in the possibility of happiness; she was ready to listen to her husband's call, and to hasten to him.

But her mother held her back. She believed not, she trusted not. Her insulted maternal heart could not forget

the humiliations and the sufferings which this man who now called for Josephine had inflicted upon her daughter. She could not pardon the viscount for having deserted his young wife, and that for the sake of a coquette! She therefore sought to inspire Josephine with mistrust; she told her that these vows of the viscount were not to be relied upon; that he had not given up his paramour to come back to Josephine, but that he was forsaken by her and abandoned by her. Madame de Gisard had regretted to be only the paramour of the Viscount de Beauharnais, and, as she could never hope to be his legitimate wife, she had abandoned him, to marry a wealthy Englishman, with whom she had left France to go with him to Italy.

At this news Josephine's head would sink down, and, with tears in her eyes and sorrow in her heart, she promised her mother no more to listen to the voice of a faithless husband; no more to value the assurances of a love which only returned to her because it was rejected elsewhere.

Meanwhile, not only the Viscount de Beauharnais prayed Josephine to return, but also his father the marquis claimed this from his beloved daughter-in-law; even Madame de Renaudin confirmed the entire conversion of Alexandre, and conjured Josephine to hesitate no longer once more to take possession of a heart which beat with so burning a sorrow and so longing a love toward her. She pictured to her, besides, how necessary she was to him; how much in these troublous and stormy days which had just begun, he was in need of a quiet haven of domestic life, there to rest after the labors and the conflicts of politics and of public life; how many dangers surrounded him, and how soon it might happen that he would need not only a household refuge but also a nurse who would bind his wounds and keep watch near the bed of sickness.

For the times of quietness were gone; the brand which the States-General had flung over France had lit a fire every-

where, in every city, in every house, in every head; and the flaming speeches of the deputies of the Third Estate only fanned the fire into higher flames.

The revolution was there, and nothing could keep back the torrent of blood, fire, enthusiasm, and hatred. Already the Third Estate had solemnly proclaimed its separation from Old France, from the ancient monarchy of the lilies, since that monarchy had abandoned the large assembly-hall where the States-General held their sessions, and in which the nobility and the clergy still imagined they were able to maintain the balance of power against the despised Third Estate. The *Tiers Etat* had, in the ballroom, converted itself into the National Assembly, and with enthusiasm had all these deputies of the third class sworn on the 17th of June, 1789, "never to part one from the other until they had given a constitution to France."

Alexandre de Beauharnais, deputy from Blois, had passed with his colleagues into the ballroom, had with them taken the fatal oath; in the decisive night of the 4th of August he, with burning enthusiasm, had renounced all the privileges of the nobility, all his feudal rights; and, breaking with the past, with all its family traditions and customs, had passed, with all the passion and zest of his nine-and-twenty years, into the hostile camp of the people and of liberty.

The revolution, which moved onward with such rash and destructive strides, had drawn Alexandre de Beauharnais more and more into its flood. It had converted the king's major into an enthusiastic speaker of the Jacobins, then into the secretary of the National Assembly, and finally into its president.

The monarchy was not yet powerless; it fought still with all the bitterness of despair, of the pains of death, against its foes; it still found defenders in the National Assembly, in the faithful regiments of the Swiss and of the

guards, and in the hearts of a large portion of the people. The passions of parties were let loose one against another; and Alexandre de Beauharnais, the president of the National Assembly, stood naturally in the first rank of those who were threatened by the attacks of the royalists.

Yes, Alexandre de Beauharnais was in danger! Since Josephine knew this, there was for her but one place which belonged to her, to which she could lay claim—the place at her husband's side.

How could she then have withstood his appeals, his prayers? How could she then have remained in the solitude and stillness of Martinique, when her husband was now in the fight, in the very struggle? She had, now that fate claimed it, either to share her husband's triumphs, or to bring him comfort if he fell.

The intercessions of her family, even the tears of her mother, could no longer retain Josephine; at the side of her husband, the father of her two children, there was her place! No one could deprive her of it, if she herself wished to occupy it.

She was entitled to it, she was still the wife of the Viscount de Beauharnais. The Parliament, which had pronounced its verdict against the demands of a divorce from the viscount, had, in declaring Josephine innocent, condemned her husband to receive into his house his wife, if she desired it; or else, in case she waived this right, to pay her a fixed annual income.

Josephine had parted voluntarily from her husband, since she had not returned to him, but had exiled herself with her father-in-law and her aunt in Fontainebleau; but she had never laid claims to nor received the income which Parliament had appointed. She had never assumed the rights of a divorced wife, but she retained still all the privileges of a married woman, who at God's altar had bound herself to her husband for a whole life, in a wedlock which,

being performed according to the laws of the Catholic Church, was indissoluble.

Now the viscount claimed his wife, and who dared keep her back if she wished to follow this call? Who could stand between husband and wife, when their hearts claimed and longed for this reunion?

The tears of Madame de la Pagerie had attempted it, but had not succeeded! The soft, patient, pliant Josephine had suddenly become a strong-minded, joyous, courageous woman; the inconveniences of a long sea-voyage, the perils of the revolution, into whose open crater she was to enter, affrighted her not. All the energies of her being began to develop themselves under the first sunbeams of a renewed love! The years of sorrow had passed away. Life, love called Josephine again, and she listened to the call, jubilant and full of friendly trust of undimmed hope!

In the first days of September, 1790, Josephine, with the little Hortense, embarked from Martinique, and after a short, favorable passage, landed in France, in the middle of October.*

Again a prophecy accompanied Josephine to France, and perhaps this prophecy is to be blamed for her sudden departure and her unwavering resolution to leave Martinique. The old negro woman who, once before Josephine's departure, had prophesied that she would wear a crown and be more than a Queen of France—the old Euphemia was

* If, in the work "Queen Hortense, an Historical Sketch from the Days of Napoleon," I have given a few different details of Josephine's return to France and to her husband, I have followed the error common to all the historians of that time, who represent Josephine returning despite her husband's will, who receives her into his house, and recognizes her as his wife, only at the instant supplication of his family, and especially of his children. It is only of late that all this has been satisfactorily refuted, and that it has been proved that Josephine returned only at the instance of her husband's pressing demands. See Aubenas, "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 164.—L. M.

still living, and was still considered as an infallible oracle. A few days before her departure, Josephine, with all the superstitious faith of a creole, went to ask the old prophetess if her journey would be propitious.

The old Euphemia stared long and fixedly into Josephine's smiling countenance; then, as if overcome by a sudden thought, she exclaimed: "Go! go as fast as possible, for death and danger threaten you! Already are on the watch wicked and bloodthirsty fiends, who every moment are ready to rush among us with fire and sword, and to destroy the colony in their cruel wrath!"

"And shall I safely arrive in France?" asked Josephine. "Shall I again see my husband?"

"You will see him again," exclaimed the prophetess, "but hasten to go to him."

"Is he threatened with any danger?" demanded Josephine.

"Not yet!—not at once!" said the old negress. "They now applaud your husband and recognize his services. But he has powerful enemies, and one day they will threaten his life, and will lead him to the scaffold and murder him!"

Before Josephine left Martinique, a portion of these prophecies of the old negro woman were to be fulfilled. The wicked and bloodthirsty fiends, of whom she said they were ready with fire and sword to rush upon the colony—those fiends did light the firebrand and destroy the peace of Martinique.

The resounding cries for freedom uttered in the National Assembly, and which shook the whole continent, had rushed along across the ocean to Martinique. The storm-wind of the revolution had on its wings borne the wondrous story to Martinique—the wondrous story of man's sacred rights, which Lafayette had proclaimed in the National Assembly, the wondrous story that man was born free, that he ought

to remain free, that there were to be no more slaves in the land of liberty, in France, and in her colonies.

The storm-wind which brought this great news across the ocean to Martinique scattered it into the negro-cabins, and at first they listened to it with wondrous delight. Then the delirium of joy came over them; jubilant they broke their chains, and in wild madness anticipated their human rights, their personal freedom.

The revolution, with its terrible consequences of blood and horrors, broke loose in Martinique, and, exulting in freedom, the slaves threw the firebrand on the roof of their former masters, rushed with war's wild cry into their dwellings, and, in freedom's name, punished those who so long had punished them in tyranny's name.

Amid the barbaric shouts of those dark free men, Josephine embarked on board the ship which was to carry her and her little Hortense to France; and the flames which rose from the roofs of the houses as so many way-marks of fire for the new era, were Josephine's last, sad farewell from the home which she was never to see again.*

CHAPTER X.

THE DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION.

Happiness had once more penetrated into the heart of Josephine. Love again threw her sun-gleams upon her existence, and filled her whole being with animation and joy. She was once more united to her husband, who, with tears of joy and repentance, had again taken her to his heart. She was once more with her relatives, who, in the day of

* Le Normand, "Mémoires de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 147.

distress, had shown her so much love and faithfulness, and finally she had also her son, her own dear Eugene, from whom she had been separated during the sad years of their matrimonial disagreements.

How different was the husband she now found from him she had quitted! He was now a man, an earnest, thoughtful man, with a fiery determination, with decidedness of purpose, and yet thoughtful, following only what reason approved, even if the heart had been the mover. The passions of youth had died away. The excitable, thoughtless, pleasure-seeking officer of the king had become a grave, industrious, indefatigable, moral, austere servant of the people and of liberty. The songs of joy, of equivocal jesting, of political satire, had died away on those lips which only opened now in the clubs, in the National Assembly, to utter inspired words in regard to liberty, fraternity, and equality.

The most beautiful dancer of Versailles had become the president of the National Assembly, which made so many tears run, and awoke so much anger and hatred in the king's palace of Versailles. He at least belonged to the constitutional fraction of the National Assembly; he was the friend and guest of Mirabeau and of Lafayette; he was the opponent of Robespierre, Marat, and Danton, and of all the fanatics of the Mountain party, who already announced their bloody views, and claimed a republic as the object of their conflicts.

Alexandre de Beauharnais was no republican, however enthusiastic he might have been in favor of America's struggle for freedom, however deeply he had longed to go like Lafayette to America, for the sake of assisting the Americans to break the chains which yoked them to England, so as to build a republic for themselves. The enthusiasm of that day, the enthusiasm for France had driven him upon the path of the opposition; but while desiring freedom for the people, he still hoped that the people's free-

dom was compatible with the power and dignity of the crown; that at the head of constitutional France the throne of a constitutional king would be maintained. To bring to pass this reunion, this balance of right between the monarchy and the people, such was the object of the wishes of Alexandre de Beauharnais; this was the ultimate aim of his struggles and longings.

Josephine looked upon these tumultuous conflicts of parties, upon this wild storm of politics, with wondering, sad looks. With all the tact of tender womanhood she held herself aloof from every personal interference in these political party strifes. At the bottom of her heart a true and zealous royalist, she guarded herself carefully from endeavoring to keep her husband back from his chosen path, and to bring into her house and family the party strifes of the political arena. She wanted and longed for peace, unity, and rest, and in his home at least her husband would have no debates to go through, no sentiments to fight against.

In silence and devotedness Josephine submitted to her husband's will, and left him to perform his political part, while she assumed the part of wife, mother, of the representative of the household; and every evening opened her drawing-room to her friends, and to her husband's associates in the same conflict.

What a mixed and extraordinary assemblage was seen in the drawing-room of the president of the National Assembly! There were the representatives of old France, the brilliant members of the old nobility: the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the Count de Montmorency, the Marquis de Caulaincourt, the Prince de Salm-Cherbourg, the Princess von Hohenzollern, Madame de Montesson, the wife of the old Duke d'Orleans; and alongside of these names of the *ancien régime*, new names rose up. There were the deputies of the National Assembly—Barnave, Mounier, Thouvet, Lafayette, and the favorite of the people, the great Mira-

beau. Old France and Young France met here in this drawing-room of Josephine on neutral grounds, and the beautiful viscountess, full of grace and prudence, offered to them both the honors of her house. She listened with modest bashfulness to the words of the great tribunes of the people, and oftentimes with a smile or a soft word she reconciled the royalists, those old friends who sought in this drawing-room for the Viscountess de Beauharnais, and found there only the wife of the president of the National Assembly.

The saloon of Josephine was soon spoken of, and seemed as a haven in which the refined, elegant manners, the grace, the wit, the *esprit*, had been saved from the stormy flood of political strife. Every one sought the privilege of being admitted into this drawing-room, whose charming mistress in her own gentleness and grace received the homage of all parties, pleased every one by her loveliness, her charms, the fine, exquisite tact with which she managed at all times the sentiments of the company, and with which she knew how to guide the conversation so that it would never dwindle into political debates or into impassioned speeches.

However violent was the tempest of faction outside, Josephine endeavored that in the interior of her home the serene peace of happiness should prevail. For she was now happy again, and all the liveliness, all the joys of youth, had again found entrance into her mind. The anguish endured, the tears shed, had also brought their blessing; they had strengthened and invigorated her heart; with their grave, solemn memories they preserved Josephine, that child of the South, of the sun, and of joy, from that light frivolity which otherwise is so often the common heritage of the creoles.

The viscount had now the satisfaction which ten years ago, at the beginning of his married life, he had so intently longed for, the satisfaction of seeing his wife occupied with grave studies, with the culture of her own mind and talents.

It was to him a ravishment to see Josephine in her drawing-room in earnest conversation with Buffon, and with all the aptitude of a naturalist speak of the organization and formation of the different families of plants; he exulted in the open praise paid to her when, with her fine, far-reaching voice, she sang the songs of her home, which she herself accompanied on the harp; he was proud when, in her saloon, with all the tact and assurance of a lady of the world, she took the lead in the conversation, and could speak with poets and authors, with artists and savants, and that, with understanding and feeling, upon their latest works and creations; he was made happy when, passing from serious gravity to the most innocent gayety, she jested, laughed, and danced, as if she were yet the sixteen-year-old child whom ten years ago he had made his wife, and from whom he had then so cruelly exacted that she should demean herself as a fine, experienced, and highly-refined lady.

Life had since undertaken to mould the young creole into an elegant, highly-accomplished woman, but fortunately life had been impotent to change her heart, and that heart was ever beating in all the freshness of youth, in all the joyous warmth and faithfulness of the young girl of sixteen years who had come to France with so many ideal visions, so many illusions, so many dreams and hopes. It is true this ideal had vanished away, these illusions had burst into pieces like meteors in the skies; the dreams and hopes of the young maiden heart had fallen into dust, but the love, the confiding, faithful, hoping love, the love assured of the future, had remained alive; it had overcome the storms and conflicts; it had been Josephine's consolation in the days of sorrow; it was now her delight in these days of happiness.

Her whole heart, her undivided love, belonged to her husband, to her children, and often from the society gathered in her reception-rooms, she would slip away and hasten

to the bed of her little Hortense to bid good-night to the child, who never would sleep without bidding good-night to its mother, who would kneel at the side of the crib with little Hortense, and utter the evening prayer, asking of God to grant to them all prosperity and peace!

But this peace which Josephine so earnestly longed for was soon to be imperilled more and more, was to be banished from the interior of home and family, from its most sacred asylum, by the revolution and its stormy factions.

An important event, pregnant with results, suddenly moved all Paris, and filled the minds of all with the most fearful anticipations.

The king, with his wife and children, had fled! Openly and irretrievably he had separated himself from country and people; he had, by this flight, solemnly expressed before all Europe the discord which existed between him and his people, between the king and the constitution to which he had sworn allegiance.

Alexandre de Beauharnais, the president of the National Assembly, was the first to be informed of this extraordinary event. On the morning of the 21st of June, 1791, M. de Bailly, mayor of Paris, came to announce to him that the king with all his family had fled from Paris the previous evening.

It was the hour at which the sessions of the National Assembly began every morning, and Beauharnais, accompanied by Bailly, hastened to the Assembly. The deputies were already seated when the president took the chair with a grave, solemn countenance. This countenance told the deputies of the people that the president had an important and very unusual message to communicate, and a deep stillness, an oppressive silence, overspread the whole assemblage as the president rose from his seat to address them.

"Gentlemen," said he, with a voice which, amid the general silence, sounded solemn and powerful—"gentlemen,

I have a sad message to bring before you. The mayor of Paris has just now informed me that the king and his family have this night been seduced into flight by the enemies of the people." *

This news had a stupendous effect on the deputies. At first they sat there dumb, as if petrified with fear; then they all rose up to make their remarks and motions in a whirl of confusion, and it required all the energy and determination of the president to re-establish peace, and to control their minds.

The Assembly then, in quiet debate, resolved to declare itself in permanent session until the termination of this crisis, and gave to the president full power during this time to provide for the tranquillity and security of the Assembly. Bailly and Lafayette were by the president summoned before the deputies, to state what the sentiments of Paris were, what was the attitude of the National Guards, what were the precautions they had taken to preserve aright the peace of Paris.

But this peace was not in danger, and the only one whom the Parisian people at this moment dreaded, was he who had fled from Paris—the king. And yet, not for a moment did the people rise in anger against the king; actuated by a new and overpowering thought, the people in their enthusiasm for this idea forgot their anger against him who by his deed had kindled this thought. The thought which was uppermost in all minds at the flight of the king was this: that the state could subsist even if there were no king at its head; that law and order still remained in Paris, even when the king had fled.

This law and order was the National Assembly, the living representation and embodiment of the law; the government was there; the king alone had disappeared. Such was the

* Aubenas, "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 171.

sentiment which animated all classes, which brought the people in streaming masses to the palace where the National Assembly held its sittings. A few hours after the news of the king's flight had spread through Paris, thousands were besieging the National Assembly, and shouting enthusiastically: "Our king is here; he is in the hall of session. Louis XVI. can go; he can do what he wills; our king is still in Paris!" *

The Assembly, "the King of Paris," remained in permanent session, waiting for the developments of events, and working out in committees the decrees passed in common deliberation, whilst the president and the secretary remained the whole night in the council-room, so as to be ready at any moment to receive fresh news and to issue the necessary orders.

Early next morning the most important news had reached the president, and the deputies hastened from their respective committees into the hall of session, there to take their seats.

Amid the breathless silence of the Assembly, President Beauharnais announced that the king, the queen, the dauphin, Madame, and divers persons of their suite, had been arrested in Varennes.

The Assembly received this communication with dignified quietude, for they were conscious that the king's return would in no wise impair their own sovereignty, that the power was in their hands, even if the king were there. In this full assurance of their dignity the National Assembly passed a decree ordering the proper authorities "to protect the king's return, to seize and imprison all those who might forget the respect they owed to the royal dignity."

At the same time the National Assembly sent from their number two deputies, Barnave and Pétion, to bring back

* Prudhomme, "Histoire Parlémentaire de la Révolution," vol. x., p. 241.

from Varennes the unfortunate royal family and to accompany them to Paris.

Meanwhile the news of the king's capture only increased the people's enthusiasm for the National Assembly, the truly acknowledged sovereign of France. Every one was anxious to give expression to this enthusiasm; the National Guards of Paris begged for the privilege of taking the oath of allegiance to the National Assembly, and when at the motion of the president this was granted by the Assembly, a whole detachment was marched into the hall so as to take the oath of allegiance to the National Assembly with one voice, amid the applause of the Assembly and the tribunes. This detachment was followed by fresh companies, and the people filled the streets to see the National Guards come and go, and like them to swear allegiance to the National Assembly with enthusiastic shouts.

The provinces would not be a whit behind the enthusiasm of Paris; and whilst the guards swore their oath, from all cities and provinces came to the president of the National Assembly, addresses congratulating the Assembly on its triumphs, and promising the most unconditional devotedness.

Finally after two days of restless activity, after two days, during which Alexandre de Beauharnais had hardly found time to quiet his wife by a note, explaining his absence from home, finally a courier brought the news that the captive royal family were entering Paris. A second courier followed the first. He announced that the royal family had reached the Tuileries surrounded by an immense crowd, whose excitement caused serious apprehensions. Pétion had, therefore, thought it expedient not to allow the royal family to alight, but had confined them to the two carriages, and he now sent the keys of these two carriages to the president of the National Assembly, as it was now his duty to adopt still further measures.

Beauharnais proposed that at once twenty deputies be

chosen to speed on to the Tuileries to deliver the royal family from their prison, and to lead them into the palace.

The motion was carried, and the deputies reached the court of the Tuileries yet in time to save the affrighted family from the people, who, in their wild madness, were about to destroy the carriages, and to take possession of the king and queen.

The presence of the deputies imposed silence on the shouts and howlings of the people. The king had come into the Tuileries, and before him bowed the people in dumb respect. They quietly allowed that this their king should open the carriage wherein the other king, the king by God's grace, Louis XVI., sat a prisoner; they allowed that the king by the grace of the people, the National Assembly, through its twenty deputies, should render liberty to Louis and to his family, and lead them quietly under their protection into the Tuileries.

But from this day the Tuileries, which for centuries had been the palace of the kings of France, now became a prison for the King of France!

Louis XVI. was returned, not as the head, but as the prisoner of the state; from the moment he left Paris, the ermine mantle of his royalty had fallen from his shoulders upon the shoulders of the National Assembly; King Louis XVI. had dethroned himself.

Amid these fatal storms, amid these ever-swelling revolutionary floods, there was yet an hour of happiness for Josephine. Out of the wild waves of rebellion was to rise, for a short time, an island of bliss. The National Assembly, whose president, Alexandre de Beauharnais, had once more, in the course of the sessions, been re-elected by general acclamation, declared itself on the 3d of September, 1791, dissolved, and its members vanished to make room for the Legislative Assembly, which organized the very next day.

Alexandre de Beauharnais, after having so long and so

zealously discharged his duties as a citizen, returned to his Josephine, to his children; and, weary with the storms and debates of the last months, longed for a quiet little place, away from the turmoil of the capital and from the attrition of parties. Josephine acquiesced gladly in the wishes of her husband, for she felt her innermost being shattered by these last exciting times, and perhaps she cherished the secret hope that her husband, once removed from Paris, would be drawn away from the dangerous arena of politics, into which his enthusiasm had driven him. She was, and remained at heart, a good and true royalist; and as Mirabeau, dying in the midst of revolution's storms, had said of himself, that "he took to his grave the mourning-badge for the monarchy," * so also Josephine's heart, since the flight to Varennes, wore the mourning-badge for the unfortunate royal family, who since that day had to endure so much humiliation, so much insult, and to whom Josephine in her loyal sense of duty consecrated the homage of a devout subject.

Josephine, therefore, gladly consented to the viscount's proposal to leave Paris. Accompanied by their children and by the governess of Hortense, Madame Lanoy, the viscount and his wife went to a property belonging to one of the Beauharnais family near Solange.

Three months were granted to Josephine in the quietude, in the sweet repose of a country-life, at her husband's side, and with her children, to gather strength from the anxieties and griefs which she had suffered in Paris. She enjoyed these days as one enjoys an unexpected blessing, a last sunshine before winter's near approach, with thankful heart to God. Full of cheerful devotedness to her husband, to her children, her lovely countenance was radiant with joy and love; she was ever busy, with the sunshine of her smile, to

* Mirabeau died on the 6th of May, 1791.—See, on his death, "Count Mirabeau," by Theodore Mundt, vol. iv.

dissipate the shadows from her husband's brow, and to replace the impassioned excitements, the honors and distinctions of his Parisian life, by the pleasantness and joys of home.

But Alexandre de Beauharnais could no longer find satisfaction in the quiet, harmless joys of home; he even reproached himself that he could be cheerful and satisfied whilst France resounded with cries of distress and complaints, whilst France was torn in her innermost life by the disputes and conflicts of factions which, no more satisfied with the speeches of the tribune, filled the streets with blood and wounds. The revolution had entered into a new phase, the Legislative Assembly had become the Constituent Assembly, which despoiled the monarchy of the last appearance of power and degraded it to a mere insignificancy. The Girondists, those ideal fanatics, who wanted to regenerate France after the model of the states of antiquity, had seized the power and the ministerial *portefeuilles*. The beautiful, witty, and noble Madame Roland ruled, by means of her husband, the Minister Roland, and was striving to realize in France the ideal of a republic after the pattern of Greece; she was the very soul of the new cabinet, the soul of the Girondists, the rulers of France; in her drawing-room, during the evening, the new laws to be proposed next day in the Constituent Assembly, were spoken of, and the government measures discussed.

For a moment it had seemed as if the king, through his cabinet of Girondists, would once more be reconciled with his people, and especially with the Constituent Assembly, as if the nation and the monarchy would once more endeavor to stand one by the other in harmony and peace. Perhaps the Girondists had believed in this possibility, and had regarded the king's assurances that he would adhere to the constitution, and that he would go hand in hand with his ministers, and accept the constitution as the faithful expres-

sion of his will. But when they discovered that Louis was not honorable in his assurances; that he was in secret correspondence with the enemies of France; that in a letter to his brother-in-law, the Emperor Leopold, he had made bitter complaints about the constraint to which he was subjected, then the Girondists were inflamed with animosity, and had recourse to counter-measures. They decreed the exile of the priests, and the formation, in the vicinity of Paris, of a camp of twenty thousand militia from all the departments of France.

Foreign nations looked upon this decree as a sign of dawning hostilities, and threatened France with counter-measures. France responded to the challenge thus thrown at her, and, in a stormy session of the Assembly, the fatherland was declared to be in danger, the organization of an army to occupy the frontiers was decreed, and all the children of the fatherland were solemnly called to her defence.

This call awoke Alexandre de Beauharnais from the dreamy repose to which he had abandoned himself during the last months. His country called him, and he dared not remain deaf to this call; it was his duty to tear himself from the quiet peace of the household, from the arms of his wife and family, and place himself in the ranks of the defenders of his country.

Josephine heard this resolution with tears in her eyes, but she could not keep back her husband, whose countenance was beaming with enthusiasm, and who dreamed of fame and victory. She accompanied Alexandre to Paris, and after he had been gladly received by the minister of war, and appointed to the Northern army, she then took from him a last, fond farewell, entreated him with all the eloquence of love to spare himself, and not wantonly to face danger, but to preserve his life for his wife and children.

Deeply moved by this tender solicitude of his wife, Alexandre promised to hold her requests as sacred. Once more

they embraced each other before they both quitted Paris on diverging roads.

Alexandre de Beauharnais went to Valenciennes, where commanded Marshal Rochambeau, to whom he had been commissioned adjutant.

Josephine hastened with her children toward Fontainebleau, so at least to be there united with her husband's father, and to live under his protection until the return of her husband.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TENTH OF AUGUST, AND THE LETTER OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

Since the death of Mirabeau, the last defender of the monarchy, since the failure of the contemplated flight, royalty in France had no chance of existence left; the throne had lost every prop upon which it could find support, and it sank more and more into the abyss which the revolution had dug under its feet.

Marie Antoinette was conscious of it; her foreboding spirit foresaw the coming evil; her proud soul nearly broke under the humiliations and griefs which every day brought on. She had hitherto courageously and heroically struggled against adversity; she had concealed tears and anguish, to smile at that people which hated her and cursed her, which insulted and reviled her constantly. But a day was to come in which the smile would forever depart from her lip—in which Marie Antoinette, the daughter of the Cæsars, so deeply humbled and trodden down in the dust, would no more lift up her head, would no more rise from the terrible blow.

This day was the 10th of August, in the year 1792. The

terrible storm, which so long had filled the air with its mutterings, and had shaken the throne with its thunderings, was on this day with terrific power to be let loose and to dash in pieces the monarchy. The king furnished the occasion for this eruption by dismissing his Girondist ministry, by not signing the decree for the organization of a national militia, and for the exile of the priests.

This refusal was the flash which broke open the heavy clouds that so long had hung over his head—the flash which caused the tempest to burst forth.

Since that day Paris was in a state of rebellion; fresh disturbances took place every day; and finally, on the morning of the 10th of August, bands of people rushed to the palace of the Tuileries and surrounded it with wild howlings and shouts. A portion of the National Guards endeavored to force the people into a retreat; the other portion united with the people in fierce assaults upon the Tuileries, and on its defenders the Swiss. These were massacred by the people armed with pikes; with jubilant howlings the armed masses rushed over the corpses of the fallen into the king's palace.

The Procurator-General Roderer implored the king to save himself with his family by taking refuge in the National Assembly, for there alone was safety for him and the queen.

Louis hesitated; but Marie Antoinette felt once more the pride of a queen awake within her; she felt it was nobler and worthier to die as the loyal Swiss had done, to die sword in hand, than to meet pardon and disgrace, than to bow her head under the yoke. She entreated the king to remain with the loyal National Guards and to fight with his soldiers and die in the palace of his fathers. She spoke to the successor of Henry IV., to the father of the dauphin, for whom he should maintain the inheritance received; she appealed to the heart, to the honor of Louis; she spoke with flaming eyes, and with the eloquence of despair.

But Louis listened not to her, but to the solicitations of Roderer, who told him that he had but five minutes to save himself, the queen, and his children; that in five minutes more all would be lost.

"It cannot be helped," muttered the king; and then with louder voice he continued: "It is my will that we be conducted into the Legislative Assembly; I command it!"

A shriek of terror broke forth from the breast of the queen; her proud heart resisted once more her husband's weakness, who, for his own and for her misfortune, was not made of the stuff which moulds kings.

"Sire," cried she, angrily and excited—"sire, you must first command that I be nailed to the walls of this palace! I remain here. I stir not from this spot!" *

But Madame Elizabeth, the Princesses de Lamballe and de Tarent, begged her with tears to consent; the good king fixed on her sad, weeping eyes, and Roderer entreated her not to abandon, by her delays, to the approaching executioners, her husband, her children, and herself.

Marie Antoinette offered to her husband her last and her greatest sacrifice; she bowed her proud head to his will; she consented to accompany the king with her children into the Assembly.

She took the dauphin in her arms, Madame Therese by the hand, and, at the side of the king, followed by the Princesses Lamballe and Tarent, walked out of the palace of the Tuileries to go to the Convent des Feuillants, where the Legislative Assembly held its sessions.

What a martyrdom in this short distance from the Tuileries to the Feuillants—what dishonor and fears were gathered on this path! Between the deep ranks of Swiss grenadiers and National Guards was this path; the queen stares fixedly on the ground, and she does not see that her thin

* The very words of the queen.—See "Mémoires Secrètes et Universelles," par Lafont d'Aussone.

silk shoes will be torn by the hard, fallen leaves of the trees under which they are moving.

But the king sees every thing, notices every thing. "How many leaves," said he, gazing forward—"they fall early this year!"

Now at the foot of the terrace the advance of the royal family is stopped by a multitude of people, who, with wild howlings, swing their pikes and clubs, and in their madness shout: "No, they must not enter the Assembly!—they are the cause of all our misery! Let us put an end to all this! Down with them!—down!"

The queen pays no attention to these shouts; she sees not that the National Guards are clearing a way by force; she walks forward with uplifted head, with a countenance petrified like that of Medusa at the sight of evil.

But as a man approaches her, seizes the dauphin and takes him in his arms, the transfixed queen is aroused, and, with all the anguish of a mother's despair, grapples the arm of the man who wants to rob her of all she now possesses, her child!

"Be not afraid," whispered the man, "I will do him no harm, I am but going to carry him;" and Marie Antoinette, her eyes fixed on the child, moves forward. At their entrance into the hall of the Assembly the man gives her back the dauphin, and she makes him sit down near her on the seats of the ministers.

A rough voice issues from the midst of the Assembly: "The dauphin belongs to the nation; place him at the side of the president. The Austrian is not worthy of our confidence!"

They tear away from the queen the weeping child, who clings to her, and who is carried to the president, at whose left hand the king has seated himself.

Again a voice is heard reminding the Assembly of the law which forbids them to deliberate in the presence of the king.

The royal family must leave the lower portion of the hall, and are led into a small room, with iron trellis-work, behind the president's chair.

The royal family, with their attendants, pressed into the small space of this room, can here at least, away from the gaze of their enemies, hide their dishonored heads; at least no one sees the nervousness of despair which now and then agitates the tall figure of the queen, the tears trembling on her eyelids when she looks to the poor little dauphin, whose blond curly head lies in her bosom, asleep from exhaustion, hunger, and sorrow.

No one sees the king and the queen, but they see and hear every thing. They hear from without the howlings of the mob, the cannon's roar, the reports of the rifles, telling them that a bloody fratricidal strife, a terrible civil war, is raging. They hear there in the hall, a few steps from them, the fanatical harangues of the deputies, whose words, full of blood, are like the hands of the murdering *Marseillais* there without. Marie Antoinette hears Vergniaud's motion, "to divest the king at once of his power and rank," and she hears the acclamations of the Assembly in favor of the motion. She hears the Assembly by their own power reinvesting the Girondist ministers, dismissed by the king, with their dignity and power! She hears the Assembly decide "to invite the French people to form a national compact."

She hears all this, and the cold perspiration of anguish and horror covers her brow while she has yet strength enough to force back her tears into her heart. She asks for a handkerchief to wipe her forehead. Not one of the attendants around can furnish a kerchief which is not stained with the blood of the victims fallen at their side in protecting the royal family with their lives.*

At last, at two o'clock in the morning, is this painful

* "Mémoires inédites du Comte de la Rochefoucauld."

martyrdom ended, and the royal family are led into the upper rooms of the convent, where hastily and penuriously enough a few chambers had been furnished.

The howlings of the crowd ascend to their windows. Under those of the queen's room groups of infuriated women sing the song whose horrible burden is, "*Madame Veto avait promis de faire égorger tout Paris.*" Between the sentences other voices shout and howl: "The queen is the cause of our misery! Kill her! kill the queen, the murderess of France! Kill Madame Veto! Throw us her head!"

Three days after, the royal family are led to the Temple. The rulers of the state are now state prisoners. But the queen had already found the peace which misfortune generally brings to strong souls; and as she walked to the Temple, and saw her foot protruding from the extremity of her shoe, she said with an affecting smile, "Who could have believed that one day the Queen of France should be in want of shoes!"

With the 10th of August began the last act of the great tragedy of the revolution. Its second scene had its representation in the first days of September, in those days of blood and tears, in which infuriated bands of the people stormed the prisons to murder the captive priests, aristocrats, and royalists.

Under the guillotine fell during this month the head of the queen's friend, the Princess de Lamballe, who was followed in crowds by the king's faithful adherents, sealing their loyalty and their love with their death.

This loyalty and love for the royal family was during this month branded as an unpardonable crime, for the National Convention, which on the 21st of September had taken the place of the Constituent Assembly, on the 25th declared France to be a republic, and the royalists became thereby criminals, who had sinned in the respect and love which they owed to the "republic one and indivisible."

The new republic of France celebrated her saturnalia in the following months, and unfurled her blood-stained standard over the nation. She was not satisfied with having brought to the guillotine more than ten thousand aristocrats and royalists, to terrify the faithful adherents and servants of the throne. She required, moreover, the death of those for whose sake so many thousands had perished—the death of the king and of the queen.

On the 5th of December began the trial of Louis Capet, ex-King of France, now accused by the Convention. The pages of history have illustrated this stupendous and tragical event in all its shapes and colors. Each party has preyed upon it, the poets have sung it, and made it the central point of tragedy and romance; but none have painted it in so telling, in so terse, masterly traits, none have so fully comprehended and expressed the already stupendous event, as Lieutenant Napoleon Bonaparte, the future Emperor of France.

He happened to be in Paris during these days of terror. He had, with all the energies of his soul, given himself up to the new state of things, and he belonged to the most upright and zealous faction of the republicans. He acknowledged himself won over to their ideas, he participated in their celebrations, he was the friend of many of the most influential and conspicuous members of the Convention, and he was rarely absent from their meetings; but in the presence of the awful catastrophe of the king's accusation and execution his proud and daring soul shrank back, and, full of misgivings, shuddered within itself. The young, enthusiastic republican, to his own great horror, found in the depths of his soul a holy respect and awe in the presence of this royalty which he so often in words had despised, and the fall of the king, this enemy of the republic, moved his heart as a calamity which had fallen upon him and upon all France. He himself gave to one of his friends in Ajaccio a

very correct description of these days. After narrating the events of the first days of the trial of the king, he continues :

" The day after I heard that the advocate Target had refused to undertake the king's defence, to which he was privileged by virtue of his office. This is what may be called, in the strictest sense of the word, to erase one's name from history. What grounds had he for such a low cunning? 'His life I will not save, and mine I dare not risk!' Malherbes, Tronchet, Deseze, loyal and devoted subjects, to imitate them in their zeal would be impossible for me; but were I a prince I would have them sit at my right hand—united together in the most strenuous efforts to defend the successor of St. Louis. If they survive this deed of sublime faithfulness, never can I pass by them without uncovering my head.

" Business detained me unavoidably in Versailles. Only on the 16th of January did I return to Paris, and consequently I had lost three or four scenes of this tragedy of ambition. But on the 18th of January I went to the National Convention. Ah, my friend, it is true, and the most infuriated republicans avow it also, a prince is but an ordinary man! His head will as surely fall as that of another man, but whosoever decrees his death trembles at his own madness, and were he not urged by secret motives, his vote would die on his lips ere it was uttered. I gazed with much curiosity at the fearless mortals who were about deciding the fate of their king. I watched their looks, I searched into their hearts. The exceeding weightiness of the occasion had exalted them, intoxicated them, but within themselves they were full of fear in the presence of the grandeur of their victim.

" Had they dared retreat, the prince had been saved. To his misfortune, they had argued within themselves, 'If his head falls not to-day, then we must soon give ours to the executioner's stroke.'

"This was the prominent thought which controlled their vote. No pen can adequately portray the feelings of the spectators in the galleries. Silent, horrified, breathless, they gazed now on the accused, now on the defenders, now on the judges.

"The vote of Orleans sounded forth—'Death!' An electric shock could not have produced deeper impression. The whole assembly, seized with an involuntary terror, rose. The hall was filled with the murmurs of conflicting emotions.

"Only one man remained seated, immovable as a rock, and that one was myself.

"I ventured to reflect on the cause of such indifference (as that of Orleans) and I found that cause grounded on ambition, but this cannot justify the conduct of Orleans. It is only thus that I could account for his action: he seeks a throne, though without any right to it, and a throne cannot be won if the pretender renounces all claims to public respect and virtue.

"I will be brief, for to unfold a mournful story is not my business. The king was sentenced to death; and if the 21st day of January does not inspire hatred for the name of France, a glorious name at least will have been added to the roll-call of her martyrs.

"What a city was Paris on that day! The population seemed to be in a state of bewilderment; all seemed to exchange but gloomy looks, and one man hurried on to meet another without uttering a word. The streets were deserted; houses and palaces were like graves. The very air seemed to mirror the executioner. In a word, the successor of St. Louis was led to the scaffold through the ranks of mourning automatons, that a short time before were his subjects.

"If any one is at your side, my friend, when you read this, conceal the following lines from him, even were he your father. It is a stain on the stuff of which my character

is made—that Napoleon Bonaparte, for the sake of a human being's destruction, should have been deeply moved and compelled to retire to his bed, is a thing barely credible, though it is true, and I cannot confess it without being ashamed of myself.

"On the night before the 21st of January I could not close my eyes, and yet I could not explain to myself the cause of this unusual excitement. I rose up early and ran everywhere to and fro where crowds had gathered. I wondered at, or much more I despised, the weakness of those forty thousand National Guards, of which the nineteenth part were practically the assistants of the executioner. At the gate of St. Denis I met Santerre; a numerous staff followed him. I could have cut off his ears. I spat down before him—it was all I could do. In my opinion, the Duke d'Orleans would have filled his place better. He had set his eyes on a crown, and, as every one knows, such a motive overcomes much hesitancy.

"Following the Boulevards, I came to the *Place de la Révolution.* The guillotine, a new invention, I had not yet seen. A cold perspiration ran over me. Near me stood a stranger, who attributed my uneasiness and pallor to some special interest on my part for the king's fate. 'Do not be alarmed,' said he, 'he is not going to die; the Convention is only glad to exhibit its power, and at the foot of the scaffold the king will find his letters of pardon.' 'In this case,' said I, 'the members of the Convention are not far from their own ruin, and could a guilty man have more deserved his fate than they? Whoever attacks a lion, and desires not to be destroyed by it, must not wound but kill on the spot.'

"A hollow, confused noise was heard. It was the royal victim. I pushed forward, making way with my elbows, and being pushed myself. All my efforts to come closer were fruitless. Suddenly the noise of drums broke upon

the gloomy silence of the crowd. 'This is the signal for his freedom,' said the stranger. 'It will fall back on the head of his murderers,' answered I; 'half a crime in a case like this is but weakness.'

"A moment's stillness followed. Something heavy fell on the scaffold. This sound went through my heart.

"I inquired of a gendarme the cause of this sound. 'The axe has fallen,' said he. 'The king is not saved then?' 'He is dead.' 'He is dead!'

"For ten times at least I repeated the words 'He is dead.'

"For a few moments I remained unconscious. Without knowing by whom, I was carried along by a crowd, and found myself on the *Quai des Théatines*, but could say nothing, except 'He is dead.'

"Entirely bewildered, I went home, but a good hour elapsed before I fully recovered my senses." *

CHAPTER XII.

THE EXECUTION OF THE QUEEN.

THE king's execution was the signal-fire which announced to the horrified world the beginning of the reign of terror, and told Europe that in France the throne had been torn down, and in its stead the guillotine erected. Yes, the guillotine alone now ruled over France; the days of moderation, of the Girondists, had passed away; the terrorists, named also men of the Mountain, on account of the high seats they occupied in the Convention, had seized the reins of power, and now controlled the course of events.

Everywhere, in every province, in every city, the blood-

* See "Edinburgh Quarterly Review," 1830.

red standard of the revolution was lifted up; might had become law; death was the rule, and in lieu of the boasted liberty of conscience was tyranny. Who dared think otherwise than the terrorists, who presumed to doubt the measures of the Convention, was a criminal who, in the name of the one and indivisible republic, was to be punished with death; whose head must fall, for he had cherished thoughts which agreed not with the schemes of the revolutionists.

How in these days of agitation and anguish Josephine rejoiced at her good fortune, that she had not to tremble for her husband's life; that she was away from the crater of the revolution which raged in Paris, and daily claimed so many victims!

Alexandre de Beauharnais was still with the army. He had risen from rank to rank; and when, in May, General Custine was deposed by the Committee of Public Safety from the command of the Northern army, Alexandre de Beauharnais, who was then chief of the general's staff of this army, was appointed in his place as commanding general of the Army of the Rhine; and the important work now to be achieved was to debar the besieging Prussians and Austrians from recapturing Mayence. The Committee of Public Safety had dismissed General Custine from his post, because he had not pressed on with sufficient speed to the rescue of Mayence, according to the judgment of these new rulers of France, who wanted from Paris to decide all military matters, and who demanded victories whilst too often refusing the means necessary for victory.

General de Beauharnais was to turn to good what General Custine, according to the opinion of these gentlemen of the Convention, had failed to do. This was an important and highly significant order, and to leave it unfulfilled was to excite the anger of the Committee of Safety; it was simply to deserve death.

General de Beauharnais knew this well, but he shrank

not back from the weighty and dangerous situation in which he was placed. To his country belonged his life, all his energies; and it was to him of equal importance whether his head fell on the battle-field or on the scaffold; in either case it would fall for his country; he would do his duty, and his country might be satisfied with him.

In this enthusiastic love for country, De Beauharnais accepted cheerfully the offered command of the Army of the Rhine as general-in-chief, and he prepared himself to march to the rescue of besieged Mayence.

Whilst General de Beauharnais was on the French frontier, Josephine trembled with anxious misgivings. The new dignity of her husband filled her with fear, for she multiplied the dangers which surrounded him and his family, for now the eyes of the terrorists were fixed on him. An unfortunate move, an unsuccessful war operation, could excite the wrath of these men of power, and send Beauharnais to the guillotine. It was well known that he belonged not to the Mountain party, but to the moderate republicans, to the Girondists; and as the Girondists were now incarcerated, as the Committee of Safety had brought accusations against them, and declared them guilty of treason toward France, it was also easy, if it pleased the terrorists, to find a flaw in the character of General Beauharnais, and to bring accusations against him as had been done against the Girondists.

Such were Josephine's fears, which made her tremble for her husband, for her children. She wished at least to secure these from the impending danger, and to save and shield them from the guillotine. Her friend, the Princess von Hohenzollern, was on the eve of leaving for England with her brother the Prince von Salm, and Josephine was anxious to seize this opportunity to save her children. She brought Eugene and Hortense to the princess, who was now waiting in St. Martin, in the vicinity of St. Pol, in the

county of Artois, expecting a favorable moment for departure; for already was the emigration watched, already it was considered a crime to leave France. With bitter tears of grief, and yet glad to know her children safe, Josephine bade farewell to her little ones, and then returned to Paris, so as to excite no suspicion through her absence. But no sooner had General Beauharnais heard of Josephine's plan to send her children from the country, than in utmost speed he dispatched to his wife a courier bearing a letter in which he decidedly opposed the departure of the children, for by this emigration his own position would be imperilled and his character made suspicious.

Josephine sighed, and, with tears in her eyes, submitted to her husband's will; she sent a faithful messenger to St. Martin to bring back Eugene and Hortense. But the Princess von Hohenzollern would not trust the children to any one; she had sworn to her friend Josephine to watch over them, never to let them go out of her sight, and she wished to keep her oath until such time as she could restore the children to their mother. She therefore returned herself to Paris, to bring back Eugene and Hortense to Josephine; and this journey, so short and so insignificant in itself, was nevertheless the occasion that the Princess von Hohenzollern remained in France; that her brother, the Prince von Salm, should mount the scaffold! The favorable moment for emigration was lost through this delay; the journey to Paris had attracted the eyes of the authorities to the doings of the princess and of her brother, the contemplated journey to England was discovered, and the incarceration of the Prince von Salm and of his sister was the natural consequence. A few months after, the prince paid with his life the contemplated attempt to migrate; his sister, the Princess von Hohenzollern, was saved from the guillotine through accident.

Meanwhile, Josephine had at least her children safely

returned, and, in the quietude and solitude of Fontainebleau, she awaited with beating heart the future developments of events; she saw increase every day the dangers which threatened her, her family, and, above all things, her husband.

Mayence was still besieged by the Austrian and Prussian forces. General Beauharnais had not completed the organization of his army so as to press onward to the rescue of the besieged, whose perils increased every day. But whilst, in unwearied activity, he urged on the preliminary operations, a courier arrived, who brought to the general his appointment to the office of minister of war, and required his immediate presence in Paris, there to assume his new dignity.

Alexandre de Beauharnais had the courage to answer with a declination the office. He entreated the Convention to make another choice, for he considered himself more competent to serve his country against the coalition of tyrants, among his companions-in-arms, than to be minister of war amid revolution's storms.

The Convention pardoned his refusal for the sake of the patriotic sentiments which he had expressed. But this refusal was to have, not only for the general, but also for all the aristocracy of France, the most fatal results. Some of the most fanatical members of the Mountain party ever considered as an audacious resistance to the commands of the Convention this refusal of Alexandre de Beauharnais, to accept the office which the highest powers of the land offered him.

It was a nobleman, an aristocrat, who had dared oppose the democratic Convention, and hence the welcome pretext was found to begin the long-wished-for conflict against the aristocrats. One of the deputies of the Mountain made the motion to remove from all public offices, from the army, from the cabinet, all noblemen. Another accused General de Beauharnais, as well as all officers from amongst the no-

bility, of moderate tendencies, and requested at the same time that a list of all officers from the nobility, and now in the army, should be laid before the Convention.

But on this very day a letter from the general reached the Convention. In this letter he expressed the hope of a speedy rescue of Mayence; he announced that he had completed the organization of his forces and all his preparations, and that soon from the camps of Vicembourg and Lauterburg he would advance against Mayence.

This letter was received by the Convention with loud acclamations, and so took possession of all minds that they passed over the motion of hostility against the nobility, to the order of the day.

Had General de Beauharnais accomplished his purpose —had he succeeded in relieving the garrison besieged in Mayence, now sorely pressed, and in delivering them, this horrible decree which caused so much blood to flow, this decree against the nobility, would never have appeared, and France would have been spared many scenes of cruelty and horror.

Beauharnais hoped still to effect the rescue. Trusty messengers from Mayence had brought him the news that the garrison held on courageously and bravely, and that they could hold their ground a few days longer. Dispatch was therefore necessary; and if in a few days they could be re-enforced, then they would be saved, provided the other generals should advance with their troops in time to attack the Austrian and Prussian forces lying round about Mayence. The French had already succeeded in obtaining some advantages over the enemy; and General de Beauharnais could triumphantly announce to the Convention that, on the 22d of July, a warm encounter with the Prussians had taken place at St. Anna's chapel, and that he had forced the Prussians to a retreat with considerable loss.

The Convention received this news with jubilant shouts,

and already trusted in the sure triumph of the French armies against the united forces of Prussia and Austria. If in these days of joyous excitement some one had dared renew the motion to dismiss Beauharnais from his command because he was a nobleman, the mover would undoubtedly have been considered an enemy of his country.

How much attention in these happy days was paid to the general's wife—how busy were even the most fanatical republicans, the dreaded ones of the Mountain, to flatter her, to give expression to their enthusiastic praises of the general who was preparing for the arms of the republic so glorious a triumph!

Josephine now came every day to be present in the gallery at the sessions of the Convention, and her gracious countenance radiated a cheerful smile when the minister of war communicated to the Assembly the newly-arrived dispatches which announced fresh advantages or closer approaches of General Beauharnais. By degrees a new confidence filled the heart of Josephine, and the gloomy forebodings, which so long had tormented her, began to fade away.

In the session of the 28th of July, Barrere, with a grave, solemn countenance, mounted the tribune and with a loud, sad voice announced to the Convention, in the name of the Committee of Safety, that a courier had just arrived bringing the news that, on the 23d of July, Mayence, in virtue of an unjust capitulation, had fallen.

A loud, piercing shriek, which issued from the gallery, broke the silence with which the Assembly had received this news. It was Josephine who had uttered this cry—Josephine who was carried away fainting from the hall. She awoke from her long swoon only to shed a torrent of tears, to press her children to her heart, as if desirous to screen them from the perils of death, which now, said her own forebodings, were pressing on from all sides.

Josephine was not deceived: this calamitous news, all at once, changed the whole aspect of affairs, gave to the Convention and to the republic another attitude, and threw its dark shadows over the unfortunate general who had undertaken to save Mayence, and had not been able to fulfil his word.

Surely this was not his fault, for General Dubayet had capitulated before it had been possible for Beauharnais to accomplish the rescue. No one therefore ventured to accuse him, but undeserved misfortune always remains a misfortune in the eyes of those who had counted upon success; and the Convention could never forgive the generals from whom they had expected so much, and who had not met these expectations.

These generals had all been men of the aristocracy. As there was no reason to accuse them on account of their unsuccessful military operations, it was necessary to attack them with other weapons, and seek a spot where they could be wounded. This spot was their name, their ancestors, who in the eyes of the republican Convention rose up like embodied crimes behind their progeny, to accuse the guilty.

The Jacobin Club, a short time after the capture of Mayence, began again in an infuriated session the conflict against the nobility, and the fanatical Hebert moved:

"All the noblemen who serve in the army, in the magistracy, in any public office, must be driven away and dismissed. The people must require this, the people themselves! They must go in masses to the Convention, and after exposing the crimes and the treachery of the aristocrats, must insist on their expulsion. The people must not leave the Convention, it must remain in permanent session there until it is assured that its will is carried out."

The multitude with loud, jubilant tones cried, "Yes, yes, that is what we want, let us go to the Convention! No more nobility! the nobles are our murderers!"

The next day, the Jacobins, accompanied by thousands of shouting women and infuriated men, went to the Convention to make known its will in the name of the people. The Convention received their petition and decreed the exile and the dissolution of the nobility, and delivered to the punishment of the law the guilty subject who would dare use the name of noble.

General de Beauharnais saw full well the blow aimed at him, and at all the officers from the nobility in the army; he foresaw that they would not stop at these measures; that soon he and his companions of fate would be accused and charged with treason, as had been already done to General Custine, and to so many others who had paid with their lives their tried loyalty to the republic. He wanted to anticipate the storm, and sent in his resignation. As the Convention left his petition unanswered, he renewed it, and as it remained still ineffective, he gladly, forced to this measure by sickness, transferred his command to General Landremont. The Convention had then to grant him leave of absence, and, as it maintained him in his rank, they ordered him back to Paris.

At last Josephine saw her husband again, for whom during the last few months she had suffered so much anxiety and pain. At last she was enabled to bring to her children the father for whom every evening they had prayed God to guard him from foes abroad and from foes at home. As a gift sent again by Heaven, she received her husband and entreated him to save himself with his family from revolution's yawning abyss, which was ready to swallow them all, and to go away with his own into a foreign land, as his brother had done, who for some months past had been in Coblentz with the Prince d'Artois.

But Alexandre de Beauharnais rejected with something like anger these tearful supplications of his wife. He was not blinded to the dangers which threatened him, but he

wanted to meet them bravely; true to the oath he had taken to the republic and to his country, he wished as a dutiful son to remain near her, even if his allegiance had to be paid with his death.

Josephine, on the bosom of her husband, wept hot, burning tears as he communicated to her his irrevocable decision not to leave France, but in the depths of her heart she experienced a noble satisfaction to find her husband so heroic and so brave, and, offering him her hand, said with tears in her eyes:

"It is well—we remain; and if we must go to the scaffold, we will at least die together."

The general, with his wife and children, retired to his small property, Ferté-Beauharnais, where he longed to obtain rest during a few happy months of quietude.

But the fearful storms which had agitated France in her innermost life, now raged so violently that each household, each family, trembled; there was neither peace nor rest in the home nor in the hearts of men.

The Convention, threatened from outside by failures and defeats—for the capture of Mayence by the Prussians and Austrians had been followed by the capture of Toulon in September by the English—the Convention wanted to consolidate at least its internal authority, and to terrify by severe measures those who, on account of the misfortunes on the frontiers, might hope for a fresh change of affairs in the interior, and who might help it to pass.

Consequently the Convention issued a decree ordering all dismissed or destitute soldiers to return in four-and-twenty hours to their respective municipalities, under pain of ten years in chains, and at the same time forbade them to enter Paris or to approach the capital nearer than ten leagues.

A second decree ordered the formation of a revolutionary army in Paris, to which was assigned the duty of carrying out the decrees of the Convention.

Finally a third decree, which appeared on the 17th of September, ordered the arrest and punishment of all suspected persons.

This decree thus characterized the suspected ones: "All those who, by their conduct, their relations, their discourses, their writings, had shown themselves the adherents of tyranny, of federalism, the enemies of liberty, much more all the ex-nobles, men, women, fathers, brothers, sons or daughters, sisters or brothers, or agents of the migrated ones, all who had not invariably exhibited and proved their adherence to the revolution."

With this decree the days of terror had reached their deepest gloom; with this decree began the wild, bloody hunting down of aristocrats and *ci-devants;* then began suspicions, accusations which needed no evidence to bring the accused to the guillotine; then were renewed the dragonnades of the days of Louis XIV., only that now, instead of Protestants, the nobles were hunted down, and hunted down to death. The night of the St. Bartholomew, the night of the murderess Catharine de Medicis and of her mad son Charles IX., found now in France its cruel and bloody repetition; only this night of horror was prolonged during the day, and shrank not back from the light.

The sun beamed upon the pools of blood which flowed through the streets of Paris, and packs of ferocious dogs in large numbers lay in the streets, and fed upon this blood, which imparted to these once tamed creatures their natural wildness. The sun beamed on the scaffold, which, like a threatening monster, lifted itself upon the *Place de la Révolution*, and the sun beamed upon the horrible axe, which every day cut off so many noble heads, and ever glittering, ever menacing, rose up from the midst of blood and death.

The sun also shone upon the day in which Marie Antoinette, like her husband, ascended the scaffold, to rest at last

in the grave from all her dishonor and from the agonies of the last years.

This day was the 16th of October, 1793. For the last four months, Marie Antoinette had longed for this day as for a long-expected bliss; four months ago she had been led from the prison of the Temple into the Conciergerie, and she knew that the prisoners of the Conciergerie only left it to obtain the freedom which men do not give, but which God gives to the suffering ones, the freedom of death.

Marie Antoinette longed for this liberty, and for this deliverance of death. How distant behind were the days of happiness, of joyous youth, far behind in infinite legendary distance! How long since this tall, grave figure, with its proud and yet affable countenance, had lost all similarity to the charming Queen Marie Antoinette, around whom had fluttered the *genii* of beauty, of youth, of love, of happiness; who once in Trianon had represented the idyl of a pastoral queen; who, in the exuberance of joy, had visited in disguise the public opera-ball; who imagined herself so secure amid the French people as to believe she could dispense with the protection of "Madame Etiquette;" who then was applauded by all France with jubilant acclamations, and who now was persecuted with mad anger!

No, the queen of that day, Marie Antoinette, who, in the golden halls of Versailles and of the Tuileries, received the homage of all France, and who, with smiling grace and face radiant with happiness, responded to all this homage; she had no resemblance with Louis Capet's widow, who now stands before the tribunal of the revolution, and gravely, firmly gives her answers to the proposed questions.

She has also made her toilet for this day; but how different is this toilet of the Widow Capet from that which once Marie Antoinette had worn to be admired!

Then could Marie Antoinette, the frivolous, fortunate

daughter of bliss, shut herself up in her boudoir for long hours with her confidante the milliner, Madame Bertier, to devise some new ball-dress, some new *fichu*, some new ornament for her robes; then could Leonard, for this queen with her wondrous blond hair, tax all the wealth of his science and of his imagination; to invent continually new *coiffures* and new head-dresses wherewith to adorn the beautiful head of the Queen Marie Antoinette, on whose towering curls clustered tufts of white plumes; or else diminutive men-of-war unfurled the net-work of their sails; or else, for variety's sake, on that royal head was arranged a garden, a *parterre* adorned with flowers and fruits, with butterflies and birds of paradise.

The Widow Capet needs no milliner now; she needs no *friseur* now for her toilette. Her tall, slim figure is draped in a black woollen dress, which the republic at her request has granted her to mourn her beheaded husband; her neck and shoulders, once the admiration of France, are now covered with a white muslin kerchief, which in pity Bault, her attendant at the jail, has given her. Her hair is uncovered, and falls in long natural curls on either side of her transparent, blanched cheeks. This hair needs no powder now; the long sleepless nights, the anxious days, have covered it with their powder forever, and the thirty-eight-year-old widow of Louis Capet wears on her head the gray hairs of a seventy-year-old woman.

In this toilet, Marie Antoinette stands before the tribunal of the revolution from the 6th to the 13th day of October. There is nothing royal about her, nothing but her look and the proud attitude of her figure.

And the people who fill the galleries in closely-packed masses, and who weary not to gaze on the queen in her humiliation, in her toilet of anguish, the people claim constantly that Marie Antoinette will rise from her rush-woven seat; that she will allow herself to be stared at by these

masses of people, whom curiosity and not compassion have brought there.

Once, as at the call from the public in the galleries, she rose up, the queen sighed: "Ah, will not the people soon be tired of my sufferings?" *

Another time her dry, blanched lips murmured, "I thirst." But no one near her dares have compassion on this sigh of agony from the queen; each looks embarrassed at his neighbor; not one dares give a glass of water to the thirsty woman.

One of the gendarmes has at last the courage to do so, and Marie Antoinette thanks him with a look which brings tears in the eyes of the gendarme, and which may perchance cause his death to-morrow under the guillotine as a traitor!

The gendarmes who guard the queen have alone the courage to show pity!

One night, as she is led from the hall of trial to her prison, Marie Antoinette becomes so exhausted, so overpowered, that staggering, she murmurs, "I can see no longer! I can go no farther! I cannot move!"

One of the gendarmes walking alongside of her offers his arm, and supported by it Marie Antoinette totters up the three stone steps which lead into the prison.

At last, at four o'clock in the morning, on the 15th of August, the jury have given their verdict. It runs: "Death! —execution by the guillotine!"

Marie Antoinette has heard the verdict with unmoved composure, whilst the noise from the excited crowd in the galleries is suddenly hushed as by a magic spell, and even the faces of the infuriated fishwomen turn pale!

Marie Antoinette alone has remained calm; grave and cool she rises from her seat and herself opens the balustrade to leave the hall and return to her prison.

* Marie Antoinette's own words.—See Goncourt, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 404.

And then at last, on the morning of the 16th of October, her sorrows will end, and Marie Antoinette can find refuge in the grave! Her soul is almost joyous and serène; she has suffered so much, and for her to sink into death is truly blessedness!

She has passed the undisturbed hours of the night in writing to her sister-in-law, Madame Elizabeth, and this letter is also the queen's testament. But the widow of Louis Capet has no riches, no treasures, no property to will; she has nothing left which belongs to her—nothing but her love, her tears, her farewell salutations. These she leaves behind to all those who have loved her. She takes leave of her relatives, her brothers and sisters, and cries out to them a farewell.

"I had friends," she continues; "the thought of being forever separated from them, and your grief for my death, are my deepest sorrow; you will at least know that to the last moment I have remembered you."

Then, when Marie Antoinette has finished this letter, some of whose characters here and there are disfigured by her tears, she thinks of leaving to her children a last token of remembrance—one which the executioner's hand has not desecrated.

The only ornament which remains is her long hair, whose silver-gray locks are the tearful history of her sufferings.

Marie Antoinette with her own hands despoils herself of this last ornament; she cuts off her long hair behind the head, so as to leave it as a last token to her children, to her relatives and friends. Then, after having taken her spiritual farewell of life, she prepares herself for the last great ceremony of her existence, for death.

She feels exhausted, weary unto death, and she strengthens herself for this last toilsome journey, that she may worthily pass through it.

Marie Antoinette needs food, and with courageous mind she eats a chicken's wing which has been brought to her. After having eaten, she makes her last toilet, the toilet of death.

The wife of the jailer, at the queen's request, gives her one of her own chemises, and Marie Antoinette puts it on. Then she clothes herself with the garments which she has worn during her days of trial before the tribunal of the revolution, only over the black woollen dress, which she has often mended and patched with her own hand, she puts on a mantle of white needlework. Around her neck she ties a small plain kerchief of white muslin, and, as it is not allowed her to mount the scaffold with uncovered head, she puts on it the round linen hood which the peasant-women used to wear. Black stockings cover her feet, and over them she draws shoes of black woollen stuff.

Her toilet is now ended—earthly things have passed away! Ready to meet death, the queen lays herself down on her bed and sleeps.

She still sleeps when she is notified that a priest is there, ready to come in, if she will confess.

But Marie Antoinette has already unveiled her heart to God; she will have none of these priests of reason, whom the republic has ordained, after having exiled or murdered with the guillotine the priests of the Church.

"As I cannot do as I please," she has written to Madame Elizabeth, in her farewell letter, "so must I endure it if a priest is sent to me; but I now declare that I will tell him not a word, that I will consider him entirely as a stranger to me."

And Marie Antoinette held her word. She forbids not the priest Girard to come in, but she answers in the negative when he asks her if she will receive from him the consolations of religion.

She paces her small cell to and fro, to warm herself, for

her feet are stiff with cold. As seven o'clock strikes, the door opens.

It is the executioner of Paris, Samson, who enters.

A slight tremor runs through the queen's frame. "You come very early, sir," murmurs she, "could you not delay somewhat?"

As Samson replies in the negative, Marie Antoinette assumes again a calm, cold attitude. She drinks without any reluctance the cup of chocolate which has been brought to her from a neighboring *café*. Proudly, calmly, she allows her hands to be bound with strong ropes behind her back.

At eleven o'clock she finally leaves her room to descend the corridor, and to mount into the wagon which waits for her before the gate of the Conciergerie.

No one guides her on the way; no one bids her a last farewell; no one shows a sympathizing or sad countenance to the departing one.

Alone, between two rows of gendarmes posted on both sides of the corridor, the queen walks forward; behind her is Samson, holding in his hand the end of the rope; the priest and the two assistants of the executioner follow him.

On the path of Death—such is the suite of the queen, the daughter of an emperor!

Perchance at this hour thousands were on their knees to offer to God their heart-felt prayers for Marie Antoinette, whom in the silence of the soul they still call "the queen;" perchance many thousand compassionate hearts pour out warm tears of sympathy for her who now ascends into the miserable wagon, and sits on a plank which ropes have made firm to both sides of the vehicle. But those who pray and weep have retired into the solitude of their rooms, for God alone must receive their sighs and see their tears. The eyes which follow the queen on her last journey must not weep; the words which are shouted at her must betray no compassion.

Paris knows that this is the hour of the queen's execution, and the Parisian crowd is ready, it is waiting. In the streets, in the windows of the houses, on the roofs, the people have stationed themselves in enormous masses; they fill the whole *Place de la Révolution* with their dark, destructive forms.

Now resound the drums of the National Guard posted before the Conciergerie. The large white horse, which draws the chariot in which Marie Antoinette sits backward, at the side of the priest, is driven onward by the man who swings on its back. Behind her in the wagon is Samson and his assistants.

The queen's face is white; all blood has left her cheeks and lips, but her eyes are red; they have wept so much, unfortunate queen! She weeps not now. Not one tear dims her eye, which pensively and calmly soars above the crowd, then is lifted up to the very roofs of the houses, then again is slowly lowered, and seems to stare over the human heads away into infinite distance.

Calm and pensive as the eye is the queen's countenance, her lips are nearly closed, no nervous movement on her face tells whether she suffers, whether she feels, whether she notices those tens of thousands of eyes which are fixed on her, cold, curious, sarcastic! And yet Marie Antoinette sees every thing! She sees yonder woman who lifts up her child; she sees how this child with his tiny hands sends a kiss to the queen! Suddenly a nervous agitation passes over the queen's features, her lips tremble, and her eyes are obscured with a tear! This first, this single token of human sympathy has revived the heart of the queen and awakened her from her torpor.

But the people are bent upon this, that Marie Antoinette shall not reach the end of her journey with this last comfort of pity. They press on, howling and shouting, scorning and jubilant, nearer and nearer to the wagon; they sing sarcas-

tic songs on Madame Veto, they clap hands, and point at her with the finger of scorn.

She, however, is calm; her look, cold and indifferent, runs over the crowd; only once it flames up with a last angry flash as she passes by the Palais Royal, where Philippe Egalité, the ex-Duke d'Orleans, resides, as she reads the inscription which he had placed at the gate of his palace.

At noon the chariot reaches at last its destination. It stops at the foot of the scaffold, and Marie Antoinette alights from the wagon, and then calm and erect ascends the steps of the scaffold.

Her lips have not opened once on this awful journey; they now have no word of complaint, of farewell! The only farewell which she has yet to say on earth is told by her look—by a look which is slowly directed yonder to the Tuileries—it is the farewell to past memories—it deepens the pallor on the cheeks, it opens her lips to a painful sigh. She then bows her head—a momentary, breathless silence follows. Samson lifts up the white head, which once had been the head of the Queen of France, and the people cry and shout, "Long live the republic!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARREST.

Uninterruptedly had the guillotine for the last three months of the year 1793 continued its destructive work of murder, and the noblest and worthiest heads had fallen under this reaper of Death. No personal merit, no nobility of character, no age, no youth, could hope to escape the death-instrument of the revolution when a noble name stood up as accuser. Before this accuser every service was con-

sidered as nothing; it was enough to be an aristocrat, a *ci-devant*, to be suspected, to be dragged as a criminal before the tribunal of the revolution, and to be condemned.

The execution of the queen was followed by that of the Girondists; and this brilliant array of noble and great men was followed in the next month by names no less noble, no less great. It was an infuriated chase of the aristocrats as well as of the officers, of all the military persons who, in the unfortunate days of Toulon and of Mayence, had been in the army, and who had been dismissed, or whose resignation had been accepted.

The aristocrats were tracked in their most secret recesses, and not only were they punished, but also those who dared screen them from the avenging hand of the republic. The officers were recognized under every disguise, and the very fact that they had disguised themselves or remained silent as to their true character was a crime great enough to be punished with the guillotine.

More than twenty generals were imprisoned during the last months of the year 1793, and many more paid with their lives for crimes which they had never committed, and which had existence only in the heated imagination of their accusers. Thus had General Houchard fallen; he was followed in the first days of the new year of 1794 by the Generals Luckner and Biron.

Alexandre de Beauharnais had served under Luckner, he had been Biron's adjutant, he had been united with General Houchard in the unfortunate attempt to relieve Mayence. It was therefore natural that he should be noticed and espied. Besides which, he was an aristocrat, a relative of many of the *émigrés*, the brother of the Count de Beauharnais, who was now residing in Coblentz with the Count d'Artois, and it had not been forgotten what an important part Alexandre de Beauharnais had played in the National Assembly; it was well known that he belonged

to the moderate party, that he had been the friend of the Girondists.

Had the Convention wished to forget it, the informers were there to remind them of it. Alexandre de Beauharnais was denounced as suspected, and this denunciation was followed, in the first days of January, by an arrest. He was taken to Paris, and at first shut up in the Luxemburg, where already many of his companions-in-arms were incarcerated.

Josephine was not in Ferté-Beauharnais when the emissaries of the republic came to arrest her husband. She was just then in Paris, whither she had gone to seek protection and assistance for Alexandre at the hands of influential acquaintances; in Paris she learned the arrest of her husband.

The misfortune, which she had so long expected and foreseen, was now upon her and ready to crush her and the future of her children. Her husband was arrested—that is to say, he was condemned to die.

At this thought Josephine rose up like a lioness; the indolence, the dreamy quietude of the creole, had suddenly vanished, and Josephine was now a resolute, energetic woman, anxious to risk every thing, to try every thing, so as to save her husband, the father of her children. She now knew no timidity, no trembling, no fear, no horror; every thing in her was decision of purpose; keen, daring action. Letters, visits, petitions, and even personal supplications, every thing was tried; there was no humiliation before which she shrank. For long hours she sat in the anterooms of the tribunal of the revolution, of the ministers who, however much they despised the aristocrats, imitated their manners, and made the people wait in the vestibule, even as the ministers of the tyrant had done; with tears, with all the eloquence of love, she entreated those men of blood and terror to give her back her husband, or at least

not to condemn him before he had been accused, and to furnish him with the means of defence.

But those new lords and rulers of France had no heart for compassion; Robespierre, Marat, Danton, could not be moved by the tears which a wife could shed for an accused husband. They had already witnessed so much weeping, listened to so many complaints, to so many cries of distress, their eyes were not open for such things, their ears heard not.

France was diseased, and only by drawing away the bad blood could she be restored to health, could she be made sound, could she rise up again with the strength of youth! And Marat, Danton, Robespierre, were the physicians who were healing France, who were restoring her to health by thus horribly opening her veins. Marat and Danton murdered from bloodthirsty hatred, from misanthropy and vengeance; Robespierre murdered through principle, from the settled fanatical conviction, that France was lost if all the old corrupt blood was not cleansed away from her veins, so as to replenish them with youthful, vitalizing blood.

Robespierre was therefore inexorable, and Robespierre now ruled over France! He was the dictator to whom every thing had to bow; he was at the head of the tribunal of revolution; he daily signed hundreds of death-warrants; and this selfsame man, who once in Arras had resigned his office of judge because his hand could not be induced to sign the death-warrant of a convicted criminal *—this man, who shed tears over a tame dove which the shot of a hunter had killed, could, with heart unmoved, with composed look, sit for long hours near the guillotine on the tribune of the revolution, and gaze with undimmed eyes on the heads of his victims falling under the axe.

He was now at the summit of his power; France lay

* See "Maximilian Robespierre," by Theodore Mundt, vol. i.

bleeding, trembling at his feet; fear had silenced even his enemies; no one dared touch the dreaded man whose mere contact was death; whose look, when coldly, calmly fixed on the face of any man, benumbed his heart as if he had read his sentence of death in the blue eyes of Robespierre.

At the side of Robespierre sat the terrorists Fouquier-Tinville and Marat, to whom murder was a delight, blood-shedding a joy, who with sarcastic pleasure listened unmoved to the cries, to the tearful prayers of mothers, wives, children, of those sentenced to death, and who fed on their tears and on their despair.

With such men at the head of affairs it was natural that the reign of terror should still be increasing in power, and that with it the number of the captives in the prisons should increase.

In the month of January, 1794, the list of the incarcerated within the prisons of Paris ran up to the number of 4,659; in the month of February the number rose up to 5,892; in the beginning of April to 7,541; and at the end of the same month it was reckoned that there were in Paris eight thousand prisoners.*

The greater the number of prisoners, the more zealous was the tribunal of the revolution to get rid of them; and with satisfaction these judges of blood saw the new improvements made in the guillotine, and which not only caused the machine to work faster, but also prevented the axe from losing its edge too soon by the sundering of so many necks.

"It works well," exclaimed Fouquier-Tinville, triumphantly; "to-day we have fifty sentenced. The heads fall like poppy-heads!"

And these fifty heads falling like poppy-heads, were not enough for his bloodthirstiness.

* Thiers, "Histoire de la Révolution Française," vol. vi., p. 41.

"It must work better still," cried he; "in the next decade, I must have at least four hundred and fifty poppy-heads!"

And then, as if inspired by a joyous and happy thought, his gloomy countenance became radiant with a grinning laughter, and, rubbing his hands with delight, he continued: "Yes, I must have four hundred and fifty! Then, if we work on so perseveringly, we will soon write over our prison-gates, 'House to let!'"*

They worked on perseveringly, and the vehicles which carried the condemned to execution rolled every morning with a fresh freight through the streets of Paris, where the guillotine, with its glaring axe, awaited them.

The month of April, as already said, had brought the number of prisoners in Paris to eight thousand; the month of April had therefore more executions to engrave with its bloody pen into the annals of history. On the 20th of April fell on the *Place de la Révolution* the heads of fourteen members of the ex-Parliament of Paris; the next day followed the Duke de Villeroy, the Admiral d'Estaing, the former Minister of War Latour du Pin, the Count de Bethune, the President de Nicolai. One day after, the well-laden wagon drove from the Conciergerie to the *Place de la Révolution;* in it were three members of the Constituent Assembly, and to have belonged to it was the only crime they were accused of. Near these three sat the aged Malesherbes, with his sister; the Marquis de Chateaubriand, with his wife; the Duchess de Grammont, and Du Chatelet. It will be seen that the turn for women had now come; for those women who were now led to the execution had committed no other crime than to be the wives or the relatives of emigrants or of accused persons, than to bear names which had shone for centuries in the history of France.

* "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine."

Josephine also had an ancient aristocratic name; she also was related to the migrated ones, the wife of an accused, of a prisoner! And she wearied the tribunal of the revolution constantly with petitions, with visits, with complaints. They were tired of these molestations, and it was so easy, so convenient to shield one's self against them! There was nothing else to do but to arrest Josephine; for once a prisoner, she could no longer—in anterooms, where she would wait for hours; in the street before the house-door, where she would stand, despite rains and winds—she could no longer trouble the rulers of France, and beseech them with tears and prayers for her husband's freedom. The prisoner could no more write petitions, or move heaven and earth for her husband's sake.

The Viscountess de Beauharnais was arrested. On the 20th of April, as she happened to be at the proper authority's office to obtain a pass according to the new law, which ordered all *ci-devants* to leave Paris in ten days, Josephine was arrested and led into the Convent of the Carmelites, which for two years had served as a prison for the bloody republic, and from which so many of its victims had issued to mount the wagon which led them to the guillotine.

Amid this wretchedness there was one sweet joy. Alexandre de Beauharnais had no sooner heard of the arrest of his wife, than he asked as a favor from the tribunal of the revolution to be removed into the same prison where his wife was. In an incomprehensible fit of merciful humor his prayer was granted; he was transferred to the Convent of the Carmelites, and if the husband and wife could not share the same cell, yet they were within the same walls, and could daily (through the turnkeys, who had to be bribed by all manner of means, by promises, by gold, as much as could be gathered together among the prisoners) hear the news.

Josephine was united to her husband. She received

daily from him news and messages; she could often, in the hours when the prisoners in separate detachments made their promenades in the yard and in the garden, meet Alexandre, reach him her hand, whisper low words of trust, of hope, and speak with him of Eugene and Hortense, of these dear children who, now deserted by their parents, could hope for protection and safety only from the faithfulness and love of their governess, Madame Lanoy. The thought of these darling ones of her heart excited and troubled Josephine, and all the pride and courage with which she had armed her heart melted into tears of anxiety and into longings for her deserted children.

But Madame Lanoy with the most faithful solicitude watched over the abandoned ones; she had once sworn to Josephine that if the calamity, which Josephine had constantly anticipated, should fall upon her and upon her husband, she would be to Hortense and Eugene a second mother; she would care for them and protect them as if they were her own children. And Madame Lanoy kept her promise.

To place them beyond the dangers which their very name made imminent, and also perhaps to give by means of the children evidence of the patriotic sentiments of the parents, Madame Lanoy left with the children the viscount's house, where they had hitherto resided, and occupied with both of them a small shabby house, where she established herself as seamstress. The little eleven-year-old Hortense, the daughter of the Citizeness Beauharnais, was now the assistant of the Citizeness Lanoy, at the trade of seamstress. Eugene was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker; a leather apron was put on, and then with a plank under his arm, and carrying a plane in his hand, he went through the streets to the workshop of the cabinet-maker, and every one lauded the patriotic sentiments of the Citizeness Lanoy, who tried to educate the brood of the ex-aristocrats into orderly and moral beings.

Eugene and Hortense fell rapidly and understandingly into the plan of their faithful governess; they transformed themselves in their language, in their dress, in their whole being and appearance, into little republicans, full of genuine patriotism. Like their cousin, Emile de Beauharnais, whose mother (the wife of the elder brother of the Viscount de Beauharnais) had already for a long time languished in prison, they attended the festivals which had for its object the glorification of the republic, and, alongside of the Citizeness Lanoy, the little milliner Hortense followed the procession of her quarter of the city, perhaps to awaken thereby the good-will of the authorities in favor of her imprisoned parents.

Then, when Madame Lanoy thought this good-will had been gained, she made a step further, and undertook to have the children present to the Convention a petition for their parents. This petition ran thus:

"Two innocent children appeal to you, fellow-citizens, for the freedom of their dear mother—their mother against whom no reproach can be made but the misfortune of being born in a class from which, as she has proven, she ever felt completely estranged, for she has ever surrounded herself with the best patriots, the most distinguished men of the Mountain. After she had on the 26th of Germinal requested a pass in order to obey the law, she was arrested on the evening of that day without knowing the cause. Citizen representatives, you cannot be guilty of oppressing innocence, patriotism, and virtue. Give back to us unfortunate children our life. Our youth is not made for suffering." Signed: Eugene Beauharnais, aged twelve years, and Hortense Beauharnais, aged eleven years.*

To this complaint of two deserted children no more attention was paid than to the cries of the dove which the

* "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," par Aubenas.

hawk carries away in its claws, but perhaps the innocent touching words of the petition had awakened compassion in the heart of some father.

It is true no answer was given to the petition of the children, but the Citizeness Lanoy was allowed to take the children of the accused twice a week into the reception-room of the Carmelite Convent, that there they might see and speak to their mother.

This was a sweet comfort, an unhoped-for joy, as well to Josephine as to her husband; for if he was not permitted to come into the lower room and see the children, yet he now saw them through the eyes of his wife, and through her he received the wishes of their tender affection.

What happiness for Josephine, who loved her children with all the unrestrained fondness of a creole! what happiness to see her Eugene, her Hortense, and to be permitted to speak to them! How much they had to say one to another, how much to communicate one to the other!

It is true much had to be passed in silence if they would not excite the anger of the turnkey, who was always present at the meeting of the children with their mother. Strict orders had been given that Josephine should never whisper one word to the children, or speak to them of the events of the day, of what was going on beyond the prison walls. The least infringement of this rule was to be punished by debarring the children from having any further conversation with their mother.

And yet they had so much to say; they needed her advice so much, so as to know what future steps they might take to accomplish their mother's freedom! They had so much to tell to Josephine about relatives and friends, and above all so much to say about what was going on outside of the prison! But how bring her news? how speak to their mother? how receive her message in such a way that the jailer's ears could not know what was said?

Love is full of invention. It turns every thing into subserviency to its end. Love once turned the dove into a carrier; love made Josephine's children find out a new mail-carrier—it made them invent the lapdog mail.

Josephine, like all creoles, had, besides her love for flowers, botany, and birds, a great fondness for dogs. Never since the earliest days of her childhood had Josephine been seen in her room, at the promenade, or in her carriage, without one of these faithful friends and companions of man, which share with the lords of creation all their good qualities and virtues, without being burdened with their failings. The love, the faithfulness, the cunningness of dogs are virtues, wherewith they successfully rival man, and the dogs boast only of one quality which amongst men is considered a despicable vice, namely, the canine humbleness which these animals practise, without egotism, without calculation, whilst man practises it only when his interest and his selfishness make it seem advantageous.

Two years before, a friend of Josephine had given her a small, young model of the then fashionable breed of dogs, a small lapdog, and at once Josephine had made a pet of the little animal, which had been recommended to her as the progeny of a rare and genuine race of lapdogs. It is true the little Fortuné had not fulfilled what had been promised; he had not grown up exactly into a model of beauty and loveliness. With small feet, a long body of a pale yellow rather than red, a thick, double, flat nose, this lapdog had nothing of its race but the black face, and the tail in the shape of a corkscrew. Besides all this, he was undoubtedly of a surly, quarrelsome disposition, and he preferred the indolence and ease of his cushion to either a promenade with Josephine or to a game with her children.

But since Josephine was no more there, since her beautiful hands no more presented him his food, a change had come over Fortuné's character; he had awakened from the

effeminacy of happiness to full activity. The children had but to say, "We are going to mamma," and at once Fortuné would spring up from his cushion with a cheerful bark, and run out into the streets, describing circles and performing joyous leaps. Fortuné, as soon as the reception-room of the prison was opened, was always the first to rush in, barking loudly at the jailer; then, when his spite was over, to run with all the signs of passionate tenderness toward his mistress; then he would surround her with caresses, and leap, bark, and whine, until she noticed him, until she should have kissed and embraced the children, and then taken him up in her arms.

But one day, as the door of the reception-room opened, and Eugene and Hortense entered with Madame Lanoy, Fortuné's loud barking trumpet sounded not, and he sprang not forward toward Josephine. He walked on gravely with measured steps at the side of Madame Lanoy, who led him with a string which she had fastened to his collar. With important, thoughtful mien, he gazed resignedly and gravely at his mistress, and even for his hated foe the jailer he had but a dull growl, which he soon repressed.

Josephine was somewhat alarmed at this change in Fortuné's demeanor, and after she had welcomed, taken to her bosom and kissed her darling children, after she had saluted the good Madame Lanoy, she inquired why Fortuné was so sad and why he was led as a captive.

"Because he is so wild and unruly, mamma," said Eugene, with a peculiar smile, "because he wants always to be the first to salute you, and because he barks so loud that we cannot possibly for some time hear what our dear mamma has to say."

"And then, in the street, he is so wicked and troublesome," cried Hortense, with eagerness, "and he always begins quarrelling and fighting with every dog which passes

by, and we must stand there and wait for him when we are so anxious to see our dear mamma."

"For all these reasons," resumed Madame Lanoy, with slow, solemn intonation, "for all these reasons we have thought it necessary to chain Fortuné and to tighten up his collar."

"And you have done quite well, citizeness," growled the turnkey, "for I had already thought of silencing forever the abominable lapdog if he again barked at me so."

Josephine said nothing, but the peculiar smile she had noticed on her children's face had passed, at the words of Madame Lanoy, over Josephine's radiant countenance, and she now with her pet names called Fortuné to her, to press him to her heart, to pat him, and by all these caresses to make amends for his having his collar somewhat tightened.

But whilst thus petting him, and tenderly smoothing down his sleek fur, her slim fingers quickly and cautiously passed under the wide collar of Fortuné. Then her eyes were rapidly directed toward the jailer. He was engaged in animated conversation with Madame Lanoy, who knew how to make him talk, by inquiring after the health of his little sick daughter.

A second time Josephine's fingers were passed under Fortuné's collar—for she had well understood the words of Madame Lanoy—with a woman's keen instinct she understood why Fortuné's collar had been drawn closer about him. She had felt the thin, closely-folded paper, which was tied up with the string in the dog's collar, and she drew it out rapidly, adroitly to hide it in her hand. She then called Hortense and Eugene, and whilst she talked with them, she slowly and carefully, under pretext of adjusting more closely the kerchief round her neck, secreted the paper in her bosom.

The jailer had seen nothing; he was telling Madame Lanoy, with all the pride of a kind father, that all the pris-

oners were anxious about his little Eugénie; that all, more than once a day, inquired how it fared with the little one; that she was the pet of the prisoners, who were so delighted to have the child with them, and for long hours to jest and play with her. Unfortunate captives, who flattered the child, and feigned love for it, so as to move the father's heart, and instil into it a little compassion for their misfortune!

When Eugene and Hortense came the next time with their faithful Lanoy, Fortuné was again led by the string as a prisoner, and this time Josephine was still more affectionate than before. She not only welcomed him at his entrance, and lifted him up in her arms, but she was yet, if possible, more affectionate toward him at the time of departure, and embraced him, and tried if the collar had not been buckled on too tightly, if the string which was tied round it did not hurt him too much. And whilst she examined this, Eugene was telling the jailer that he was now a worthy apprentice of a cabinet-maker, and that he hoped one day to be a useful citizen of the republic. The jailer was listening to him with a complacent smile, and had no suspicion that at this moment Josephine's cunning fingers were making sure with the string under the collar the note in which she gave an answer to the other note that she had before found under the collar of Fortuné.*

From this day, Josephine knew every thing of importance in Paris; from this time she could point out to her children the means to pursue so as to win to their parents influential and powerful friends, so that they might one day be delivered from their captivity. Fortuné was love's messenger between Josephine and her children; a beam of happiness had penetrated both cells, where lived Alexandre de Beauharnais and Josephine, and they owed this gleam only to the lapdog mail.

* "Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire," par M. L. Arnould, vol. iii., p. 3.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN PRISON.

SINCE France had become a democratic republic, since the differences in rank were abolished, and liberty, equality, and fraternity alone prevailed, the aristocracy was either beyond the frontiers of France or else in the prisons. Outside of the prison were but *citoyens* and *citoyennes;* inside of the prison were yet dukes and duchesses, counts and countesses, viscounts and viscountesses; there, behind locks and bars, the aristocracy was represented in its most glorious and high-sounding names.

And there also, within these walls, was the proud, strict dame, whom Marie Antoinette had once, to her misfortune, driven away from the Tuileries, and who had not been permitted to possess a single foot of ground in all France—there, within the prison with the aristocrats, lived also Madame Etiquette. She had to leave the Tuileries with the nobility, and with the nobility she had entered into the prisons of the Conciergerie and of the Carmelite Convent. There she ruled with the same authority and with the same gravity as once in happier days she had done in the king's palace.

The republic had mixed together the prisoners without any distinction, and in the hall, where every morning they gathered together to attend to the roll-call of the condemned who were to report for the guillotine; in the narrow rooms and cells, where they passed the rest of the day, the republic had made no distinction between all these inmates of the prison, dukes and simple knights, duchesses and baronesses, princesses of the blood and country nobility of inferior degree. But etiquette was there to remedy this unseemliness of fate and to re-establish the natural order of things —etiquette, which had enacted rules and laws for the halls

of kings, enforced them also in the halls of prisons. Only for the ladies of the most ancient nobility, the duchesses and princesses of the blood, in the prison-rooms, as once in the king's halls, the small stool (*tabouret*) was reserved, and they were privileged to occupy the rush-bottomed seats which were in the prisons, and which now replaced the *tabouret*. No lady of inferior rank would consent to sit down in their presence unless these ladies of superior rank had expressly requested and entitled their inferior companions of misfortune to do so. When, at the appointed hour, the halls were abandoned for the general promenade in the yards of the Conciergerie, or in the small cloistered gardens of the Carmelites, this recreation was preceded by a ceremony which shortened its already short hour by at least ten minutes: the ladies and the gentlemen, according to their order, rank, and nobility, placed themselves in two rows on either side of the outer door, and between them passed on first in ceremonial order of rank, as at a court-festival, the ladies and gentlemen who at court were entitled to the high and small levees, as well as to the *tabouret*, and to the kissing of the queen's hand. As they passed, each bowed low, and then, with the same due observance of rank, as was customary at court, the ladies and gentlemen of inferior titles followed two by two, when the higher nobility had passed.*

It was yet the court-society which was assembled here in the rooms and cells of the prison; only this court-society, this aristocracy, had no more King Louis to do homage unto, but they served another king, they bowed low before another queen! This king to whom the nobility of France belonged was Death; this queen to which proud heads bowed low was the Guillotine!

It was King Death who now summoned the aristocrats

* "Souvenirs de la Marquise de Créqui, vol. v.

to his court; the scaffold was the hall of festivity where solemn homage was made to this king. It would therefore have been against all etiquette to crowd into this hall of festivity with beclouded countenance; this would have diminished the respect due to King Death, if he had not been approached with full-court ceremonial, and with the serene, easy smile of a courtier. To die, to meet death was now a distinction, an honor for which each almost envied the other. When at ten o'clock in the morning the gathering took place in the large room, the conversation was of the most cheerful and unaffected easiness; they joked, they laughed, they speculated on politics, though it was well known that in a few minutes yonder door was to open, and that on its threshold the jailer would appear, list in hand; that from this list he would call out with his loud, croaking voice, as Death's harbinger, the names of those whose death-warrants had been yesterday signed by Robespierre, and who would have immediately to leave the hall, to mount the wagons which were already waiting at the prison's gate to drive them to the guillotine.

While the jailer read his list, suspense and excitement were visible on all faces, but no one would have so deeply lowered himself as to betray fear or anguish when his name fell from the lips of the jailer. The smile remained on the lip, friends and acquaintances were bidden farewell with a cheerful salutation, and with easy, unaffected demeanor they quitted the hall to mount the fatal vehicle.

To die gracefully was now considered as much *bon ton* as it had been once fashionable gracefully to enter the ball-room and do obeisance to the king; contempt and scorn would have followed him who might have exhibited a sorrowful mien, hesitation, or fear.

One morning the jailer had read his list, and sixteen gentlemen and ladies of the aristocracy had consequently to leave the hall of the Conciergerie to enter both wagons now

ready at the gate. As they were starting for the fatal journey a second turnkey appeared, to say that through some accident only one of the wagons was ready, and that consequently only eight of the sentenced ones could be driven to the guillotine. This meant that the accident nullified eight death-warrants and saved the lives of eight sentenced persons. For it was not probable that these eight persons would next morning be honored with an execution. Their warrants were signed, their names had been called; neither the tribunal of the revolution nor the jailer could pay special attention whether their heads had fallen or not. The next day would bring on new condemnations, new lists, new distinctions for the wagons, new heads for the guillotine. Whoever, on the day appointed for the execution, missed the guillotine, could safely reckon that his life was saved; that henceforth he was amongst the forgotten ones, of whom a great number filled the prisons, and who expected their freedom through some favorable accident.

To-day, therefore, only eight of the sixteen condemned were to mount the wagon. But who were to be the favored ones? The two turnkeys, with cold indifference, left the choice to the condemned. Only eight could be accommodated in the wagon, they said, and it was the same who went or who remained. "Make your choice!"

A strife arose among the sixteen condemned ones—not as to who might remain behind, but as to those who might mount into the wagon.

The ladies declared that, according to the rules of common politeness, which allowed ladies to go first, the choice belonged to them; the gentlemen objected to this motion of the ladies on the plea that to reach the guillotine steps had to be ascended, and as etiquette required that in going up-stairs the gentlemen should always precede the ladies, they were also now entitled to go first and to mount the steps of the scaffold before the ladies. At last all had to

give way to the claims of the Duchess de Grammont, who declared that at this festival as at every other the order of rank was to be observed, and that she, as well as all the gentlemen and ladies of superior rank, had the undisputed privilege now, as at all other celebrations, to take the precedency.

No one ventured to oppose this decision, and the Duchess de Grammont, proud of the victory won, was the first to leave the room and mount the wagon.

Another time the turnkey began to read the list: every one listened with grave attention, and at every call a clear, cheerful "Here I am!" followed.

But after the jailer, with wearied voice, had many times repeated a name from his list, the accustomed answer failed. No one came forward, no one seemed to be there to lay claim to that name and to the execution. The jailer stopped a few minutes, and as all were dumb, he continued, indifferent and unmoved, to call out the names.

"We will then have only fifteen heads to deliver to-day," said he, after reading the list, "for there must have been a mistake. One of the names is false, or else the person to whom it belongs has already been delivered."

"It is probably but a blunder of the pen!" exclaimed a handsome young man who, smiling, stepped out of the crowd of listeners and passed on to the side where the victims stood. "You read Chapetolle. There is no such name here. The hand of the writer was probably tired of writing the numerous lists of those who are sentenced to death, and he has therefore written the letters wrong. My name is Chapelotte, and I am the one meant by Chapetolle."

"I do not know," said the jailer, "but it is certain that sixteen sentenced ones ought to go into the wagons, and that only fifteen have reported themselves in a legal way."

"Well, then, add me in an illegal manner to your fifteen,"

said the young man, smiling. "Without doubt it is my name they intended to write. I do not wish to save my life through a blunder in writing, and who knows if another time I may find such good company as to-day in your chariot? Allow me then to journey on with my friends."

The jailer had no reason to refuse him this journey, and he had the satisfaction besides of being thus able to deliver sixteen sentenced prisoners to the guillotine.

Such was the society of the aristocrats, among whom Josephine lived the long, dreary days of her imprisonment. The cell she occupied was shared by two companions of misfortune, the Duchess de Aguillon and the beautiful Madame de Fontenay, who afterward became Madame Tallien, so distinguished and renowned for her beauty and wit. Therese de Fontenay knew, and every one knew, that she was already sentenced, even if her sentence was not yet written down and countersigned. It was recorded in the heart of Robespierre. He had sentenced her, without any concealment. She had but a few weeks more to endure the martyrdom, the anguish of hope and of expectation. She was his secure victim; Robespierre needed not hasten the fall of this beautiful head, which was the admiration of all who saw it. This beauty was the very crime which Robespierre wanted to punish, for with this beauty, Therese de Fontenay, who then resided in Bordeaux with her husband, had captivated the old friend and associate in sentiments of Robespierre, the fanatical Tallien; with this beauty she had converted the man of blood and terror into a soft, compassionate being, inclined to pardon and to mercy toward his fellow-beings.

Tallien had been sent as *commissionnaire* from the Convention to Bordeaux, and there with inexorable severity he had raged against the unfortunate merchants, from whom he exacted enormous assessments, and whom he sentenced to the guillotine if they refused, or were unable to pay

But suddenly love changed the bloodthirsty tiger into a sensitive being, and the beautiful Madame de Fontenay, who had become acquainted with Tallien in the prison of Bordeaux, had worked a complete change in his whole being. For the first time this man, who unmoved had condemned to death King Louis and the Girondists, found on his lips the word "pardon;" for the first time the hand which had signed so many death-warrants wrote the order to let a prisoner go free.

This prisoner was Therese de Fontenay, the daughter of the Spanish banker Cabarrus, and she rewarded him for the gift of her life with a smile which forever made him her captive. From this time the death-warrants were converted into pardons from his lips, and for every pardon Therese thanked him with a sweet smile, with a glowing look of love.

But this leniency was looked upon as criminal by the tribunal of terror in Paris. They recalled the culprit who dared pardon instead of punishing; and if Robespierre did not think himself powerful enough to send Tallien as a traitor and as an apostate to the scaffold, he punished him for his leniency by separating from him Therese de Fontenay, who had abandoned the husband forced upon her, and who had followed Tallien to Paris, and Robespierre had sent her to prison.

There, at the Carmelites', was Therese de Fontenay; she occupied the same cell as Josephine; the same misfortune had made them companions and friends. They communicated one to the other their hopes and fears; and when Josephine, with tears in her eyes, spoke to her friend of her children, of her deep anguish, for they were alone and abandoned in the world outside of the prison walls, whilst their unfortunate pitiable mother languished in prison, Therese comforted and encouraged her.

"So long as one lives there is hope," said Therese, with

her enchanting smile. "Myself, who in the eyes of you all am sentenced to death, hope—no, I hope not—I am convinced that I will soon obtain my freedom. And I swear that, as soon as I am free, I will stir heaven and earth to procure the liberty of my dear friend Josephine and of her husband the Viscount de Beauharnais, and to give back to the poor orphaned children their parents."

Josephine answered with an incredulous smile, and a shrugging of the shoulders; and then Therese's very expressive countenance glowed, and her large, black eyes flashed deeper gleams.

"You have no faith in me, Josephine," she said, vehemently; "but I repeat to you, I will soon obtain my freedom, and then I will procure your liberty and that of your husband."

"But how will you obtain that?" asked Josephine, shaking her head.

"I will ruin Robespierre," said Therese, gravely.

"In what do your means of ruining him consist?"

"In this letter here," said Therese, as she drew out of her bosom a small paper folded up. "See, this sheet of paper; it consists but of a few lines which, since they would not furnish me with writing-materials, I have written with my blood on this sheet of paper, which I found yesterday in the garden during the promenade. The turnkey will give this letter to-day to Tallien. He has given me his word, and I have promised him that Tallien will recompense him magnificently for it. This letter will ruin Robespierre and make me free, and then I will procure the freedom of the Viscount and of the Viscountess de Beauharnais."

"What then, in that letter is the magic word which is to work out such wonders?"

Therese handed the paper to her friend.

"Read," said she, smiling.

Josephine read: "Therese of Fontenay to the citizen

Tallien. Either in eight days I am free and the wife of my deliverer, the noble and brave Tallien, who will have freed the world from the monster Robespierre, or else, in eight days, I mount the scaffold; and my last thought will be a curse for the cowardly, heartless man who has not had the courage to risk his life for her he loved, and who suffers for his sake, for his sake meets death—who had not the mind to consider that with daring deed he must destroy the bloodthirsty fiend or be ruined by him. Therese de Fontenay will ever love her Tallien if he delivers her; she will hate him, even in death, if he sacrifices her to Robespierre's blood-greediness!"

"If, through mishap, Robespierre should receive this letter, then you and Tallien are lost," sighed Josephine.

"But Tallien, and not Robespierre, will receive it, and I am saved," exclaimed Therese. "Therefore, my friend, take courage and be bold. Wait but eight days patiently. Let us wait and hope."

"Yes, let us wait and hope," sighed Josephine. "Hope and patience are the only companions of the captive."

CHAPTER XV.

DELIVERANCE.

MEANWHILE the patience of the unfortunate prisoners of the Carmelite convent were to be subjected to a severe trial; and the very next day after this conversation with Therese de Fontenay, Josephine believed that there was no more hope for her, that she was irrevocably lost, as her husband was lost. For three days she had not seen the viscount, nor received any news from him. Only a vague report had reached her that the viscount was no longer in the

Carmelite convent, but that he had been transferred to the Conciergerie.

This report told the truth. Alexandre de Beauharnais had once more been denounced, and this second accusation was his sentence of death. For some time past the fanatical Jacobins had invented a new means to find guilty ones for the guillotine, and to keep the veins bleeding, so as to restore France to health. They sent emissaries into the prisons to instigate conspiracies among the prisoners, and to find out men wretched enough to purchase their life by accusing their prison companions, and by delivering them over to the executioner's axe. Such a spy had been sent into that portion of the prison where Beauharnais was, and he had begun his horrible work, for he had kindled discord and strife among the prisoners, and had won a few to his sinister projects. But Beauharnais's keen eye had discovered the traitor, and he had loudly and openly denounced him to his fellow-prisoners. The next day, the spy disappeared from the prison, but as he went he swore bloody vengeance on General de Beauharnais.*

And he kept his word; the next morning De Beauharnais was summoned for trial, and the gloomy, hateful faces of his judges, their hostile questions and reproaches, the capital crimes they accused him of, led him to conclude that his death was decided upon, and that he was doomed to the guillotine.

In the night which followed his trial, Alexandre de Beauharnais wrote to his wife a letter, in which he communicated to her his sad forebodings, and bade her farewell for this life. The next day he was transferred to the Conciergerie—that is to say, into the vestibule of the scaffold.

This letter of her husband, received by Josephine the

* "Mémoires du Comte de Lavalette," vol. i., p. 175.

next day after her conversation with Therese de Fontenay, ran thus:

"The fourth Thermidor, in the second year of the republic. All the signs of a kind of trial, to which I and other prisoners have been subjected this day, tell me that I am the victim of the treacherous calumny of a few aristocrats, patriots so called, of this house. The mere conjecture that this hellish machination will follow me to the tribunal of the revolution gives me no hope to see you again, my friend, no more to embrace you or our children. I speak not of my sorrow: my tender solicitude for you, the heartfelt affection which unites me to you, cannot leave you in doubt of the sentiments with which I leave this life.

"I am also sorry to have to part with my country, which I love, for which I would a thousand times have laid down my life, and which I no more can serve, but which beholds me now quit her bosom, since she considers me to be a bad citizen. This heart-rending thought does not allow me to commend my memory to you; labor, then, to make it pure in proving that a life which has been devoted to the service of the country, and to the triumph of liberty and equality, must punish that abominable slanderer, especially when he comes from a suspicious class of men. But this labor must be postponed; for in the storms of revolution, a great people, struggling to reduce its chains to dust, must of necessity surround itself with suspicion, and be more afraid to forget a guilty man than to put an innocent one to death.

"I will die with that calmness which allows man to feel emotion at the thought of his dearest inclinations—I will die with that courage which is the distinctive feature of a free man, of a clear conscience, of an exalted soul, whose highest wishes are the prosperity and growth of the republic.

"Farewell, my friend; gather consolation from my

children; derive comfort in educating them, in teaching them that, by their virtues and their devotion to their country, they obliterate the memory of my execution, and recall to national gratitude my services and my claims. Farewell to those I love: you know them! Be their consolation, and through your solicitude for them prolong my life in their hearts! Farewell! for the last time in this life I press you and my children to my heart!—ALEXANDRE BEAUHARNAIS."

Josephine had read this letter with a thousand tears, but she hoped still; she believed still in the possibility that the gloomy forebodings of her husband would not be realized; that some fortunate circumstance would save him or at least retard his death.

But this hope was not to be fulfilled. A few hours after receiving this letter the turnkey brought to the prisoners the bulletin of the executions of the preceding day. It was that day Josephine's turn to read this bulletin to her companions. She therefore began her sad task; and, as slowly and thoughtfully she let fall name after name from her lips, here and there the faces of her hearers were blanched, and their eyes filled with tears.

Suddenly Josephine uttered a piercing cry, and sprang up with the movement of madness toward the door, shook it in her deathly sorrow, as if her life hung upon the opening of that door, and then she sank down fainting.

Unfortunate Josephine! she had seen in the list of those who had been executed the name of General Beauharnais, and in the first excitement of horror she wanted to rush out to see him, or at least to give to his body the parting kiss.

On the sixth Thermidor, in the year II., that is, on the 24th of July, 1794, fell on the scaffold the head of the General Viscount de Beauharnais. With quiet, composed coolness he had ascended the scaffold, and his last cry, as he laid his head on the block, was, "Long live the republic!"

In the wagon which drove him to the scaffold, he had found again a friend, the Prince de Salm-Kirbourg, who was now on his way to the guillotine, and who had risked his life in bringing back to Paris the children of Josephine.

His bloodthirsty enemies had not enough of the head of General Beauharnais; his wife's head also should fall, and the name of the traitor of his country was to be extinguished forever.

Two days after the execution of her husband, the turnkey brought to Josephine the writ of her accusation, and the summons to appear before the tribunal of the revolution —a summons which then had all the significancy of a death-warrant.

Josephine heard the summons of the jailer with a quiet, easy smile; she had not even a look for the fatal paper which lay on her bed. Near this bed stood the physician, whom the compassionate republic, which would not leave its prisoners to die on a sick-bed, but only on the scaffold, had sent to Josephine to inquire into her illness and afford her relief.

With indignation he eagerly snatched the paper from the bed, and, returning it back to the jailer, exclaimed: "Tell the tribunal of the revolution that it has nothing more to do with this woman! Disease will bring on justice here, and leave nothing to do for the guillotine. In eight days Citoyenne Beauharnais is dead!" *

This decision of the physician was transmitted to the tribunal, which resolved that the trial of Madame Beauharnais would be postponed for eight days, and that the tribunal would wait and see if truly death would save her from the guillotine.

Meanwhile, during these eight days, events were to pass which were to give a very different form to the state of

* Aubenas, "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 235.

things, and impart to the young republic a new, unexpected attitude.

Robespierre ruled yet, he was the feared dictator of France! But Tallien had received the note of his beautiful, fondly-loved Therese, and he swore to himself that she should not ascend the scaffold, that she should not curse him, that he would possess her, that he would win her love, and destroy the fiend who stood in the way of his happiness, whose blood-streaming hands were every day ready to sign her death-warrant.

On the very same day in which he received the letter of Therese, he conversed with a few trusty friends, men whom he knew detested Robespierre as much as himself, and who all longed for an occasion to destroy him. They planned a scheme of attack against the dictator who imperilled the life of all, and from whom it was consequently necessary to take away life and power, so as to be sure of one's life. It was decided to launch an accusation against him before the whole Convention, to incriminate him as striving after dominion, as desirous of breaking the republic with his bloody hands, and ambitious to exalt himself into dictator and sovereign. Tallien undertook to fulminate this accusation against him, and they all agreed to wait yet a few days so as to gain amongst the deputies in the Convention some members who would support the accusation and give countenance to the conspirators. On the ninth Thermidor this scheme was to be carried out; on the ninth Thermidor, Tallien was to thunder forth the accusation against Robespierre and move his punishment!

This enterprise, however, seemed a folly, an impossibility, for at this time Robespierre was at the height of his power, and fear weighed upon the whole republic as a universal agony. No one dared oppose Robespierre, for a look from his eye, a sign from his hand sufficed to bring death, to lead to the scaffold.

The calm, peaceful, and united republic for which Robespierre had toiled, which had been the ultimate end of his bloodthirstiness, was at last there, but this republic was built upon corpses, was baptized with streams of blood and tears. And now that the republic had given up all opposition, now that she bowed, trembling under the hand of her conqueror, now, Robespierre wanted to make her happy, he wanted to give her what the storms of past years had ravished from her—he wanted to give the republic a God! On the tribune of the Convention, on this tribune which was his throne, rose Robespierre, to tell with grave dignity to the republic that there was a Supreme Being, that the soul of man was immortal. Then, accompanied by the Convention, he proceeded to the Champ de Mars, to inaugurate the celebration of the worship of a Supreme Being as his high-priest. But amid this triumph, on his way to the Champ de Mars, Robespierre the conqueror had for the first time noticed the murmurs of the Tarpeian rock; he had noticed the dark, threatening glances which were directed at him from all sides. He felt the danger which menaced him, and he was determined to remove it from his person by annihilating those who threatened.

But already terror had lost its power, no one trembled before the guillotine, no one took pleasure in the fall of the axe, in the streams of blood, which empurpled the *Place de la Révolution*. The fearful stillness of death hung round the guillotine, the people were tired of applauding it, and now and then from the silent ranks of the people thundered forth in threatening accents the word "tyrant!" which, as the first weapon of attack, was directed against Robespierre, who, on the heights of the tribune, was throned with his unmoved, calm countenance.

Robespierre felt that he must strike a heavy, decisive blow against his foes and annihilate them. On the eighth Thermidor, he denounced a plot organized by his enemies

for breaking up the Convention. Through St. Just he implicated as leaders of this conspiracy some eminent members of the committees, and requested their dismissal. But the time was past when his motions were received with jubilant acclamations, and unconditionally obeyed. The Convention decided to submit the motion of Robespierre to a vote, and the matter was postponed to the next morning's session.

In the night which preceded the contemplated action of the Convention, Robespierre went to the Jacobin Club and requested assistance against his enemies in the Convention. He was received with enthusiasm, and a general uprising of the revolutionary element was decided upon, and organized for the following morning.

The same night, Tallien, his friends and adherents, met together, and the mode of attack for the following day, the ninth Thermidor, was discussed, and the parts assigned to each.

The prisoners in the Carmelite convent did not of course suspect any thing of the events which were preparing beyond the walls of their prison. Even Therese de Fontenay was low-spirited and sad; for this day, the ninth Thermidor, was the last day of respite fixed by her to Tallien for her liberty.

This was also the last day of respite which had saved Josephine from the tribunal of the revolution, through the decision of her physician. Death had spared her head, but now it belonged to the executioner. The captives feared the event, and they were confirmed in this fear by the jailer, who, on the morning of the ninth Thermidor, entered the room which Josephine, the Duchess d'Aiguillon, and Therese de Fontenay occupied, and who removed the camp-bed which Josephine had hitherto used as a sofa, to give it to another prisoner.

"How," exclaimed the Duchess d'Aiguillon, "do you

want to give this bed to another prisoner? Is Madame de Beauharnais to have a better one?"

The turnkey burst into a coarse laugh. "Alas! no," said he, with a significant gesture, "Citoyenne Beauharnais will soon need a bed no more."

Her friends broke into tears; but Josephine remained composed and quiet. At this decisive moment a fearful self-possession and calmness came over her; all sufferings and sorrow appeared to have sunk away, all anxiety and care seemed overcome, and a radiant smile illumined Josephine's features, for, through a wondrous association of ideas, she suddenly remembered the prophecy of the negro-woman in Martinique.

"Be calm, my friends," said she, smiling; "weep not, do not consider me as destined to the scaffold, for I assure you I am going to live: I must not die, for I am destined to be one day the sovereign of France. Therefore, no more tears! I am the future Queen of France!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the Duchess d'Aiguillon, half angry and half sad, "why not at once appoint your state dignitaries?"

"You are right," said Josephine, eagerly; "this is the best time to do so. Well, then, my dear duchess, I now appoint you to be my maid of honor, and I swear it will be so."

"My God! she is mad!" exclaimed the duchess, and, nearly fainting, she sank upon her chair.

Josephine laughed, and opened the window to admit some fresh air. She perceived there below in the street a woman making to her all manner of signs and gestures. She lifted up her arms, she then took hold of her dress, and with her hand pointed to her robe.

It was evident that she wished through these signs and motions to convey some word to the prisoners, whom perhaps she knew, for she repeatedly took hold of her robe with one hand, and pointed at it with the other.

"Robe?" cried out Josephine interrogatively.

The woman nodded in the affirmative, then took up a stone, which she held up to the prisoner's view.

"Pierre?" ask Josephine.

The woman again nodded in the affirmative, and then placed the stone (*pierre*) in her robe, made several times the motion of falling, then of cutting off the neck, and then danced and clapped her hands.

"My friends," cried Josephine, struck with a sudden thought, "this woman brings us good news, she tells us *Robespierre est tombé.*" (Robespierre has fallen.)

"Yes, it is so," exclaimed Therese, triumphantly; "Tallien has kept his word; he conquers, and Robespierre is thrust down!"

And, overpowered with joy and emotion, the three women, weeping, sank into each other's arms.

They now heard from without loud cries and shouts. It was the jailer, quarrelling with his refractory dog. The dog howled, and wanted to go out with his master, but the jailer kicked him back, saying: "Away, go to the accursed Robespierre!"

Soon joyous voices resounded through the corridor; the door of their cell was violently opened, and a few municipal officers entered to announce to the Citizeness Madame Fontenay that she was free, and bade her accompany them into the carriage waiting below to drive her to the house of Citizen Tallien. Behind them pressed the prisoners who, from the reception-room, had followed the authorities, to entreat them to give them the news of the events in Paris.

There was now no reason for the municipal authorities to make a secret of the events which at this hour occupied all Paris, and which would soon be welcomed throughout France as the morning dawn of a new day.

Robespierre had indeed fallen! Tallien and his friends had in the Convention brought against the despot the accu-

sation that he was striving for the sovereign power, and that he had enthroned a Supreme Being merely to proclaim himself afterward His visible representative, and to take all power in his own hands. When Robespierre had endeavored to justify himself, he had been dragged away from the speaker's tribune; and, as he defended himself, Tallien had drawn a dagger on Robespierre, and was prevented from killing the tyrant by a few friends, who by main force turned the dagger away. Immediately after this scene, the Convention decided to arrest Robespierre and his friends Couthon and St. Just; and the prisoners, among whom Robespierre's younger brother had willingly placed himself, were led away to the Luxemburg.*

The prisoners welcomed this news with delight; for with the fall of Robespierre, had probably sounded for them the hour of deliverance, and they could hope that their prison's door would soon be opened, not to be led to the scaffold, but to obtain their freedom.

Therese de Fontenay, with the messengers sent by Tallien, left the Carmelite cloisters to fulfil the promise made by her to Tallien in her letter, to become his wife, and to pass at his side new days of happiness and love.

She embraced Josephine tenderly as she bade her farewell, and renewed to her the assurance that she would consider it her dearest and most sacred duty to obtain her friend's liberty.

In the evening of the same day, Josephine's camp-bed was restored to her; and, stretching herself upon it with intense delight, she said smilingly to her friends: "You see, I am not yet guillotined; I will be Queen of France." †

* The next day, on the tenth Thermidor, Robespierre, who in the night had attempted to put an end to his life with a pistol, was executed with twenty-one companions. His brother was among the number of the executed.

† "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Josephine," ch. xxxiii.

Therese de Fontenay, now Citoyenne Tallien, kept her word. Three days after obtaining her liberty, she came herself to fetch Josephine out of prison. Her soft, mild disposition had resumed its old spell over Tallien, whom the Convention had appointed president of the Committee of Safety. The death-warrants signed by Robespierre were annulled, and the prisons were opened, to restore to hundreds of accused life and liberty. The bloody and tearful episode of the revolution had closed with the fall of Robespierre, and on the ninth Thermidor the republic assumed a new phase.

Josephine was free once more! With tears of bliss she embraced her two children, her dear darlings, found again! In pressing her offspring to her heart with deep, holy emotion, she thought of their father, who had loved them both so much, who had committed to her the sacred trust of keeping alive in the hearts of his children love for their father.

Encircling still her children in her arms, she bowed them on their knees; and, lifting up to heaven her eyes, moist with tears, she whispered to them: "Let us pray, children; let us lift up our thoughts to heaven, where your father is, and whence he looks down upon us to bless his children."

Josephine delayed not much longer in Paris, where the air was yet damp with the blood of so many murdered ones; where the guillotine, on which her husband had died, lifted yet its threatening head. She hastened with her children to Fontainebleau, there to rest from her sorrows on the heart of her father-in-law, to weep with him on the loss they both had suffered.

The dream of her first youth and of her first love had passed away, and to the father of her beheaded husband Josephine returned a widow; rich in gloomy, painful experiences, poor in hopes, but with a stout heart, and a determination to live, and to be at once a father and a mother to her children.

BOOK II.

THE WIFE OF GENERAL BONAPARTE.

CHAPTER XVI.

BONAPARTE IN CORSICA.

The civil war which for four years had devastated France had also with its destruction and its terrors overspread the French colonies, and in Martinique as well as in Corsica two parties stood opposed to each other in infuriated bitterness —one fighting for the rights of the native land, the other for the rights of the French people, for the "liberty, equality, and fraternity" which the Convention in Paris had adopted for its motto, since it delivered to the guillotine, on the *Place de la Révolution*, the heads of those who dared lay claim for themselves to this liberty of thought so solemnly proclaimed.

In Corsica both parties fought with the same eagerness as in France, and the execution of Louis XVI. had only made the contest more violent and more bitter.

One of these parties looked with horror on this guillotine which had drunk the blood of the king, and this party desired to have nothing in common with this French republic, with this blood-streaming Convention which had made of terror a law, and which had destroyed so many lives in the name of liberty.

At the head of this party stood the General Pascal Paoli, whom the revolution had recalled to his native isle from his exile of twenty years, and who objected that Corsica should

bend obediently under the blood-stained hand of the French Convention, and whose wish it was that the isle should be an independent province of the great French republic.

To exalt Corsica into a free, independent republic had been the idea of his whole life. For the sake of this idea he had passed twenty years in exile; for, after having made Corsica independent of Genoa, he had not been able to obtain for his native isle that independence for which he had fought with his brave Genoese troops. During eight years he had perseveringly maintained the conflict—during eight years he had been the ruler of Corsica, but immovable in his republican principles; he had rejected the title of king, which the Corsican people, grateful for the services rendered to their fatherland, had offered him. He had been satisfied to be the first and most zealous servant of the island, which, through his efforts, had been liberated from the tyrannical dominion of Genoa. But Genoa's appeal for assistance had brought French troops to Corsica; the Genoese, harassed and defeated everywhere by Paoli's brave troops, had finally transferred the island to France. This was not what Paoli wanted—this was not for what he had fought!

Corsica was to be a free and independent republic; she was to bow no more to France than to Genoa; Corsica was to be free.

In vain did the French government make to General Paoli the most brilliant offers; he rejected them; he called the Corsicans to the most energetic resistance to the French occupation; and when he saw that opposition was in vain, that Corsica had to submit, he at least would not yield, and he went to England.

The cry for liberty which, in the year 1790, resounded from France, and which made the whole world tremble, brought him back from England to Corsica, and he took the oath of allegiance to free, democratic France. But the

blood of the king had annulled this oath, the Convention's reign of terror had filled his soul with horror; and, after solemnly separating himself from France, he had, in the year 1793, convoked a *Consulta*, to decide whether Corsica was to submit to the despotism of the French republic, or if it was to be a free and independent state. The *Consulta* chose the latter position, and named Paoli for president as well as for general-in-chief of the Corsicans.

The National Convention at once called the culprit to its bar, and ordered him to Paris to justify his conduct, or to receive the punishment due. But General Paoli paid no attention to the imperious orders of the Convention, which, as the chief appeared not at its bar, declared him, on the 15th of May, 1793, a traitor to his country, and sent commissioners to Corsica to arrest the criminal.

This traitor to the state, the General Pascal Paoli, was then at the head of the Moderate party in Corsica, and he loudly and solemnly declared that, in case of absolute necessity, it would be preferable to call England to their assistance than to accept the yoke of the French republic, which had desecrated her liberty, since she had soiled it with the blood of so many innocent victims.

But in opposition to General Paoli rose up with wild clamor the other party, the party of young, enthusiastic heads, who were intoxicated with the democratic ideas which had obtained the sway in France, and which they imagined, so great was their impassioned devotedness to them, possessed the power and the ability to conquer the whole world.

At the head of this second party, which claimed unconditional adherence to France, to the members of the Convention—at the head of this fanatical, Corsican, republican, and Jacobin party, stood the Bonaparte family, and above them all the two brothers Joseph and Napoleon.

Joseph was now, in the year 1793, chief justice of the tribunal of Ajaccio; Napoleon, who was captain of artillery

in the French army of Italy, had then obtained leave of absence to visit his family. Both brothers had been hitherto the most affectionate and intimate admirers of Paoli, and especially Napoleon, who, from his earliest childhood, had cherished the most unbounded admiration for the patriot who preferred exile to a dependent grandeur in Corsica. Even now, since Paoli's return to Corsica, and Napoleon had had many opportunities to see him, his admiration for the great chief had lost nothing of its force or vitality. Paoli seemed sincerely to return this inclination of Napoleon and of his brother, and in the long evening walks, which both brothers made with him, Napoleon's mind opened itself, before his old, experienced companion, the great general, the noble republican, with a freedom and a candor such as he had never manifested to others. With subdued admiration Paoli listened to his short, energetic explanations, to his descriptions, to his war-schemes, to his warm enthusiasm for the republic; and one day, carried away by the warmth of the young captain of artillery, the general, fixing his glowing eyes upon him, exclaimed: "Young man, you are modelled after the antique; you belong to Plutarch!"

"And to General Paoli!" replied Napoleon, eagerly, as he pressed his friend's hand affectionately in his own.

But now this harmonious concord between General Paoli and the young men was destroyed by the passion of party views. Joseph as well as Napoleon belonged to the French party; they soon became its leaders; they were at the head of the club which they had organized according to the maxims and principles of the Jacobin Club in Paris, and to which they gave the same name.

In this Jacobin Club at Ajaccio Napoleon made speeches full of glowing enthusiasm for the French republic, for the ideas of freedom; in this club he enjoined on the people of Corsica to adhere loyally to France, to keep fast and to defend with life and blood the acquired liberty of republican

France, to regard and drive away as traitors to their country all those who dared guide the Corsican people on another track.

But the Corsican people were not there to hear the enthusiastic speeches about liberty and to follow them. Only a few hundred ardent republicans of the same sentiment applauded the republican Napoleon, and cried aloud that the republic must be defended with blood and life. The majority of the Corsican people flocked to Paoli, and the commissioners sent by the Convention from Paris to Corsica, to depose and arrest Paoli, found co-operation and assistance only among the inhabitants of the cities and among the French troops. Paoli, the president of the *Consulta*, was located at Corté; the messengers of the Convention gathered in Bastia the adherents of France, and excited them to strenuous efforts against the rebellious *Consulta* and the insurgent Paoli.

Civil war with all its horrors was there; the raging conflicts of the parties tore apart the holy bonds of family, friendship, and love. Brother fought and argued against brother, friend rose up against friend, and whole families were destroyed, rent asunder by the impassioned rivalries of sentiment and partisanship. Denunciations and accusations, suspicions and enmities, followed. Every one trembled at his own shadow; and, to turn aside the peril of death, it was necessary to strike.*

The Bonaparte brothers opposed General Paoli with violent bitterness; bloody conflicts took place, in which the national Corsican party remained victorious. Irritated and embittered by the opposition which some of the natives themselves were making to his patriotic efforts, Paoli persecuted with zealous activity the conquered, whom he resolved to destroy, that they might not imperil the young Corsican

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 51.

independence. Joseph and Napoleon Bonaparte were the leaders of this party, and Paoli knew too well the energy and the intellectual superiority of Napoleon not to dread his influence. Him, above all things, him and his family, must he render harmless, so as to weaken and to intimidate the French party. He sent agents to Ajaccio, to arrest the whole Bonaparte family, and at the same time his troops approached the town to occupy it and make the French commissioners prisoners. But these latter, informed in time of the danger, had gained time and saved themselves on board the French frigate lying in the harbor, and with them the whole Bonaparte family had embarked. Napoleon, on whom the attention of Paoli's agents had been specially directed, was more than once in danger of being seized by them, and it was due to the advice of a friend that, disguised as a sailor, he saved himself in time on board the French frigate and joined his family." * The commissioners of the Convention at once ordered the anchor to be weighed, and to steer toward France.

This frigate, on board of which the Bonaparte family in its flight had embarked, carried to France the future emperor and his fortune.

The house, the possessions of the Bonaparte family, fell a prey to the conquerors, and on them they gave vent to their vengeance for the successful escape of the fugitives. A witness of these facts is a certificate which Joseph Bonaparte a few months later procured from Corsica, and which ran as follows:

"I, the undersigned, Louis Conti, procurator-syndic of the district of Ajaccio, department of Corsica, declare and certify: in the month of May of this year, when General Paoli and the administration of the department had sent into the city of Ajaccio armed troops, in concert with other

* "Mémoires de la Duchess d'Abrantes," vol. i.

traitors in the city, took possession of the fortress, drove away the administration of the district, incarcerated a large portion of the patriots, disarmed the republican forces, and, when these refused to give up the commissioners of the National Convention, Paoli's troops fired upon the vessel which carried these commissioners:

"That these rebels endeavored to seize the Bonaparte family, which had the good fortune to elude their pursuit:

"That they destroyed, plundered, and burnt every thing which belonged to this family, whose sole crime consisted in their unswerving fidelity to the republicans, and in their refusal to take any part in the scheme of isolation, rebellion, and disloyalty, of which Paoli and the administration of the department had become guilty.

"I moreover declare and certify that this family, consisting of ten individuals, and who stood high in the esteem of the people of the island, possessed the largest property in the whole department, and that now they are on the continent of the republic.

"(Signed) CONTI, Proc.-Synd. Delivered on the 5th of September, 1793, Year II. of the republic." *

Paoli, the conqueror of the French republic, the patriotic enemy of the Bonaparte family, drove Napoleon Bonaparte from his native soil! The cannon of the Corsican patriots fired upon the ship on which the future emperor of the French was steering toward his future empire!

But this future lay still in an invisible, cloudy distance —of one thing, however, was the young captain of artillery fully conscious: from this hour he had broken with the past, and, by his dangers and conflicts, by the sacrifice of his family's property, by his flight from Corsica, given to the world a solemn testimony that he recognized no other country, that he owed allegiance to no other nation than to

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 52.

France. He had proved that his feelings were not Corsican, but French.

The days of his childhood and youth sank away behind him, with the deepening shadows of the island of Corsica, and the shores which rose before him on the horizon were the shores of France. There lay his future—his empire!

CHAPTER XVII.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE BEFORE TOULON.

Whilst Paris, yet trembling, bowed under the bloody rule of the Convention, a spirit of opposition and horror began to stir in the provinces; fear of the terrorists, of the Convention, began to kindle the courage, to make defiance to these men of horror, and to put an end to terrorism. The province of Vendée, in her faithfulness and loyalty to the royal family, arose in deadly conflict against the republicans; the large cities of the south, with Toulon at their head, had shielded themselves from the horrors which the home government would have brought them, by uniting with the enemies who now from all sides pressed upon France.

Toulon gave itself up to the combined fleet of England and Spain. Marseilles, Lyons, and Nismes, contracted an alliance together, and declared their independence of the Convention and of the terrorists. Everywhere in all the cities and communities of the south the people rose up, and seditions and rebellions took place. Everywhere the Convention had to send its troops to re-establish peace by force, and to compel the people to submit to its rule. Whole army corps had to be raised to win back to the republic the rebellious cities, and only after hard fighting did General Carteaux subdue Marseilles.

But Toulon held out still, and within its protecting walls had the majority of the inhabitants of Marseilles taken refuge before the wrath of the Convention, which had already sent to the latter some of its representatives, to establish there the destructive work of the guillotine. Toulon offered them safety; it seemed impregnable, as much by its situation as by the number and strength of its defenders. It could also defy any siege, since the sea was open, and it could by this channel be provisioned through the English and Spanish fleet.

No one trembled before the little army of seventeen thousand men which, under General Carteaux, had invested Toulon.

But in this little army of the republicans was a young soldier whom yet none knew, none feared, but whose fame was soon to resound throughout the world, and before whom all Europe was soon tremblingly to bow.

This young man was Napoleon Bonaparte, the captain of artillery. He had come from Italy (where his regiment was) to France, to make there, by order of his general, some purchases for the park of artillery of the Italian army. But some of the people's representatives had had an opportunity of recognizing the sharp eye and the military acquirements of the young captain of artillery; they interceded in his favor, and he was promoted to the army corps which was before Toulon, and at once sent in the capacity of assistant to General Carteaux, with whom also was Napoleon's brother Joseph, as chief of the general's staff.

From this moment the siege, which until now had not progressed favorably, was pushed on with renewed energy, and it was due to the cautious activity, the daring spirit of the captain of artillery, that marked advantages were gained over the English, and that from them many redoubts were taken, and the lines of the French drawn closer and closer to the besieged city.

But yet, after many months of siege, Toulon held out still. From the sea came provisions and ammunition, and on the land-side Toulon was protected against capture by a fort occupied by English troops, and which, on account of its impregnable position, was called "Little Gibraltar." From this position hot-balls and howitzers had free range all over the seaboard, for this fort stood between the two harbors of the city and immediately opposite Toulon. The English, fully appreciating the importance of the position, had occupied it with six thousand men, and surrounded it with intrenchments.

It came to this, as Napoleon in a council of war declared to the general, that the English must be driven out of their position; then, when this fort was taken, in two days Toulon must yield.

The plan was decided upon, and from this moment the besiegers directed all their strength no more against Toulon, but against the important fort, "Little Gibraltar," "for there," as Napoleon said, "there was the key to Toulon."

All Europe now watched with intense anxiety the events near Toulon; all France, which hitherto with divided sentiments had wished the victory to side now with the besieged, now with the besiegers, forgot its differences of opinion, and was united in the one wish to expel the hated enemy and rival, the English, from the French city, and to crown the efforts of the French army with victory.

The Convention, irritated that its orders should not have been immediately carried out, had in its despotic power recalled from his command General Carteaux, who could not succeed in capturing Toulon, and had appointed as chief of battalion the young captain of artillery, Napoleon Bonaparte, on account of his bravery in capturing some dangerous redoubts. The successor of Carteaux, the old General Dugommier, recognizing the superior mind of the young chief of battalion, willingly followed his plans,

and was readily guided and led by the surer insight of the young man.

The position of new Gibraltar had to be conquered so as to secure the fall of Toulon; such was, such remained Napoleon's unswerving judgment. No effort, no cost, no blood, was to be spared to attain this result. He placed new batteries against the fort; stormed the forts Malbosquet and Ronge; a terrible struggle ensued, in which the English General O'Hara was taken prisoner by the French, and the English had to leave the fort and retreat into the city.

The first great advantage was won, but Little Gibraltar remained still in the hands of the English, and Napoleon desired, and felt it as an obligation, to subdue it at any price.

But already the Convention began to be discouraged, and to lose energy, and the deputies of the people, Barras and Fréron, who until now had remained with the besieging army, hastened to Paris to implore the Convention to give up the siege, and to recall the army from Toulon.

But before they reached Paris the matter was to be decided before Toulon. The fate of the Little Gibraltar was to be fulfilled; it was to be taken, or in the storming of it the French army was to perish.

Thousands of shells were thrown into the fort, thirty cannon thundered against it. Napoleon Bonaparte mixed with the artillerymen, encouraged by his bold words their activity, their energy, and their bravery, and pointed to them the spots where to direct their balls. Whilst he was in conversation with one of the cannoneers near whom he stood, a cannon-ball from the English tore away the head of the artilleryman who had just lifted up the match to fire his cannon.

Napoleon quietly took up the burning match out of the hand of the dead man, and discharged the gun. Then, with all the zeal and tact of an experienced cannoneer, he began to load the piece, to send forth its balls against the enemy;

and for many hours he remained at this post, until another artilleryman was found to relieve the chief of division.*

But whilst Napoleon made himself a cannoneer in the service of his country, he remained at the same time the chief of division, whose attention was everywhere, whose eagle glance nothing escaped, and who knew how to improve every advantage.

A body of troops was at a distant point, and Bonaparte wanted to send them an important order. Whilst loading his cannon, he called aloud to an under-officer to whom he might dictate the dispatch. A young man hastened to the call, and said he was ready to write. Upon a mound of sand he unfolded his pocket-book, drew out of it a piece of paper, and began to write what Napoleon, with a voice above the cannon's roar, was dictating to him. At this very moment, as the order was written, a cannon-ball fell quite near the officer, burrowing the ground, and scattering some of the light sand over the written paper. The young man raised his hat and made a bow to the cannon-ball, that buried itself in the sand.

* This brave action of Napoleon was to have for him evil results. The cannoneer, from whose hand he took the match, was suffering from the most distressing skin-disease, generally breaking out with the greatest violence in the hand. The match which the cannoneer had for hours held in his hand was yet warm with its pressure, and imparted to Napoleon's hand the poison of the contagious disease. For years he had to endure the eruption, which he could not conquer, as he had conquered nations and princes, but to its destructive and painful power he had to subdue his body. The nervous agitations to which he was subject, the shrugging of his right shoulder, the white-greenish complexion of his face, the leanness of his body, were all consequences of this disease. It was only when Napoleon had become emperor, that Corvisart succeeded, by his eloquence, in persuading him to follow a regular course of treatment. This treatment cured him; his white-greenish complexion and his leanness disappeared. The nervous movement of the shoulder remained, and became a habit. —See "Mémoires de Constant," vol. i.

"I thank you," said he, "you have saved me sand for my paper."

Napoleon smiled, and looked with a joyous, sympathizing glance at the young officer, whose handsome pleasing countenance was radiant with bold daring and harmless merriment.

"Now, I need a brave messenger to carry this order to that exposed detachment," said Napoleon.

"I will be the messenger," cried out the officer, eagerly.

"Well, I accept you, but you must remove your uniform, and put on a blouse, so as not to be too much exposed."

"That I will not do," exclaimed the young man. "I am no spy."

"What! you refuse to obey?" asked Napoleon, threateningly.

"No, I refuse to assume a disguise," answered the officer. "I am ready to obey, and even to carry the order into the very hands of the devil. But with my uniform I go, otherwise those cursed Englishmen might well imagine that I am afraid of them."

"But you imperil your life if you go in your glittering uniform."

"My life does not belong to me," cried out gayly the young soldier. "Who cares if I risk it? You will not be sorry about it, for you know me not, citizen-officer, and it is all the same to me. Shall I not go in my uniform? I should be delighted to encounter those English gentlemen, for, with my sword and the sprightly grains in my patron's pocket, the conversation will not sleep, I vow. Now, then, shall I go, citizen-officer?"

"Go," said Napoleon, smiling. "But you are wrong if you think I will not be sorry in case you pay this duty with your life. You are a brave fellow, and I love the brave. Go; but first tell me your name, that when you return I

may tell General Dugommier what name he has to inscribe in his papers of recommendation for officers; that will be the reward for your message."

"My name is Junot, citizen-officer," exclaimed the young man as, swinging the paper in his hand, he darted away eagerly.

The roar of the cannon was still heard, when Napoleon's messenger returned, after a few hours, and reported to him. The chief of division received him with a friendly motion of his head.

"Welcome, Junot," said he. "I am glad to see you back, and that you have successfully accomplished your task. I must now make a change of position in yonder battallion. To-morrow I will give you your commission of lieutenant, citizen-soldier."

"And to-day grant me a nobler reward, citizen-officer," said the young man, tenderly; "give me your hand, and allow me to press it in mine."

Napoleon, smiling, gave him his hand. The eyes of both young men met in radiant looks, and with these looks was sealed the covenant which united them both in a friendship enduring to the tomb. For not one of his companions-in-arms remained attached to Napoleon with so warm, true, nearly impassioned tenderness as Junot, and none of them was by the general, the consul, the emperor, more implicitly trusted, more heartily beloved than his Junot, whom he exalted to the ranks of general, governor of Lisbon, Duke d'Abrantes, who was one of the few to whom in his days of glory he allowed to speak to him in all truth, in all freedom, and without reserve.

But whilst the two young men were sealing this covenant of friendship with this look of spiritual recognition, the cannon was thundering forth on all sides. The earth trembled from the reports of the pieces; all the elements seemed unloosed; the storm howled as if to mingle the noise of

human strife with the uproar of Nature; the sea dashed its frothy, mound-like waves with terrible noise on the shore; the rain poured down from the skies in immense torrents, and everything around was veiled in mists of dampness and smoke. And amid all this, crackled, thundered, and hissed the shells which were directed against Little Gibraltar, or whizzed from Toulon, to bring death and destruction among the besiegers.

Night sank down, and yet Little Gibraltar was not taken. "I am lost," sighed General Dugommier. "I shall have to pay with my head, if we are forced to retreat."

"Then we must go forward," cried Bonaparte; "we must have Little Gibraltar."

An hour after, a loud cry of victory announced to General Dugommier that the chief of division had reached his aim, that Little Gibraltar was captured by the French.

As the day began to dawn, the French had already captured two other forts; and Bonaparte roused all his energies to fire from Little Gibraltar upon the enemy's fleet. But the English admiral, Lord Hood, knew very well the terrible danger to which he was exposed if he did not at once weigh anchor.

The chief of division had prophesied correctly: in Little Gibraltar was the key of Toulon; and since the French had now seized the keys, the English ships could no longer close the city against them. Toulon was lost—it had to surrender to the conquerors.*

It is true, defensive operations were still carried on, but Napoleon's balls scattered death and ruin into the city; the bursting of shells brought destruction and suffering everywhere, and in the city as well as in the harbor columns of flames arose from houses and ships.

Toulon was subdued; and the chief of division, Napo-

* Toulon fell on the 18th of December, 1793.

leon Bonaparte, had achieved his first brilliant pass of arms before jubliant France and astonished Europe; he had made his name shine out from the obscurity of the past, and placed it on the pages of history.

The Convention showed itself thankful to the daring soldier, who had won such a brilliant victory alike over the foreign as well as over the internal enemies of the republic; and Napoleon Bonaparte, the chief of division, was now promoted to the generalship of division.

He accepted the nomination with a quiet smile. The wondrous brilliancy of his eyes betrayed only to a few friends and confidants the important resolves and thoughts which moved the soul of the young general.

In virtue of the order of the Convention, the newly-appointed General Bonaparte was to go to the army of the republic which was now stationed in Italy; and he received secret instructions from the Directory concerning Genoa. Bonaparte left Paris, to gather, as he hoped, fresh laurels and new victories.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BONAPARTE'S IMPRISONMENT.

On the 25th day of March, 1794, General Bonaparte entered the headquarters of the French army in Nice. He was welcomed with joy and marks of distinction, for the fame of his heroic deeds before Toulon had preceded him; and on Bonaparte's pale, proud face, with its dark, brilliant eyes, was written that he was now come into Italy to add fresh laurels to the victor's crown won before Toulon.

The old commander-in-chief of the French army, General Dumerbion, confined oftentimes to his bed through sickness, was very willing to be represented by General

Bonaparte, and to place every thing in his hands; and the two representatives of the people, Ricord and Robespierre (the younger brother of the all-powerful dictator)—these two representatives in the army corps of Italy bound themselves in intimate friendship with the young general, who seemed to share their glowing enthusiasm for the republic, and their hatred against the monarchy and the aristocrats. They cherished, moreover, an unreserved confidence in the military capacities of young Bonaparte, and always gave to his plans their unconditional assent and approbation. Upon Napoleon's suggestion batteries were erected on the coast of Provence for the security of the fleet and of trading-vessels; and when this had been accomplished, the general began to carry out the plan which he had laid before the representatives of the republic, and according to which the republican army, with its right and left wings advancing simultaneously on the sea-coast, was to march through the neutral territory of Genoa into Italy.

This plan of Bonaparte was crowned with the most unexpected success. Without observing the neutrality of Genoa, Generals Massena and Arena marched through the territory of the proud Italian republic, and thus began the bloody war which was to desolate the Italian soil for so many years.

Ever faithful to Bonaparte's war-schemes, which the general-in-chief, Dumerbion, and the two representatives of the people, Ricord and Robespierre, had sanctioned, the French columns moved from the valleys, within whose depths they had so long and so uselessly shed their blood, up to the heights and conquered the fortresses which the King of Sardinia had built on the mountains for the protection of his frontiers. Thus Fort Mirabocco, on the pass of the Cross, fell into the hands of General Dumas, who then conquered the intrenched Mount Cenis; thus the pass of Tenda, with the fortress Saorgio, was captured by the French; and there,

in the general depot of the Piedmontese army, they found sixty cannon and war materials of all kinds.

The French had celebrated their first victories in Italy, and both commanding officers of the fortresses of Mirabocco and Saorgio had to pay for these triumphs in Turin with the loss of their lives; whilst General Bonaparte, "as the one to whose well-matured plans and arrangements these brilliant results were due," received from the Convention brilliant encomiums.

But suddenly the state of affairs assumed another shape, and at one blow all the hopes and plans of the young, victorious general were destroyed.

Maximilian Robespierre had fallen; with him fell the whole party; then fell his brother, who a short time before had returned to Paris, and had there endeavored to obtain from Maximilian new and more ample powers for Bonaparte, and even the appointment to the chief command of the army—there fell also Ricord, who had given to General Bonaparte the letter of secret instructions for energetic negotiations with the government of Genoa, and to carry out which instructions Bonaparte had at this time gone to that city.

As he was returning to his headquarters in Saona, from Paris had arrived the new representatives, who came to the army of Italy as delegates of the Convention, and were armed with full powers.

These representatives were Salicetti, Albitte, and Laporte. The first of these, a countryman of Bonaparte, had been thus far his friend and his party associate. He was in Corsica at the same time as Napoleon, in the year 1793; he had been, like his young friend, a member of the Jacobin Club of Ajaccio, and Salicetti's speeches had not been inferior to those of Napoleon, either in wildness or in exalted republicanism.

But now Salicetti had become the representative of the

moderate party; and it was highly important for him to establish himself securely in his new position, and to give to the Convention a proof of the firmness of his sentiments by manifesting the hatred which he had sworn to the terrorists, and to all those who, under the fallen *régime*, had obtained recognition and distinction.

General Bonaparte had been a friend of the young Robespierre; loudly and openly he had expressed his republican and democratic sentiments; he had been advanced under the administration of Robespierre, from simple lieutenant to general; he had been sent to Genoa, with secret instructions by the representatives of the Committee of Safety, made up of terrorists—all this was sufficient to make him appear suspicious to the moderate party, and to furnish Salicetti an opportunity to show himself a faithful partisan of the new system of moderation.

General Bonaparte was, by order of the representatives of the people, Salicetti and Albitte, arrested at his headquarters in Saona, because, as the warrant for arrest, signed by both representatives, asserted: "General Bonaparte had completely lost their confidence through his suspicious demeanor, and especially through the journey which he had lately made to Genoa." The warrant of arrest furthermore ordered that General Bonaparte, whose effects should be sealed and his papers examined, was to be sent to Paris, under sure escort, and be brought for examination before the Committee of Safety.

If this order were carried into execution, then Bonaparte was lost; for, though Robespierre had fallen, yet with his fall the system of blood and terror had not been overthrown in Paris; it had only changed its name.

The terrorists, who now called themselves the moderates, exercised the same system of intimidation as their predecessors; and to be brought before the Committee of Safety, signified the same thing as to receive a death-warrant.

Bonaparte was lost, if it truly came to this, that he must be led to Paris.

This was what Junot, the present adjutant of Napoleon, and his faithful friend and companion, feared. It was therefore necessary to anticipate this order, and to procure freedom to Bonaparte.

A thousand schemes for the rescue of his beloved chief, crossed the soul of the young man. But how make them known to the general? how induce him to flee, since all approaches to him were forbidden? His zeal, his inventive friendship, succeeded at last in finding a means. One of the soldiers, who was placed as sentry at the door of the arrested general, was bribed by Junot; through him a letter from Junot reached Bonaparte's hands, which laid before him a scheme of flight that the next night could be accomplished with Junot's help.

Not far from Bonaparte's dwelling Junot awaited the answer, and soon a soldier passed by and brought it to him.

This answer ran thus: "In the propositions you make, I acknowledge your deep friendship, my dear Junot; you are also conscious of the friendship I have consecrated to you for a long time, and I trust you have confidence in it.

"Man may do wrong toward me, my dear Junot; it is enough for me to be innocent; my conscience is the tribunal which I recognize as sole judge of my conduct.

"This conscience is quiet when I question it; do, therefore, nothing, if you do not wish to compromise me. Adieu, dear Junot. Farewell, and friendship." *

Meanwhile, notwithstanding his quiet conscience, Bonaparte was not willing to meet his fate passively and silently, and, perchance, it seemed to him that it was "not enough to be innocent," so as to be saved from the guillotine. He therefore addressed a protest to both representatives of the

* Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 241.

people who had ordered his arrest, and this protest, which he dictated to his friend Junot, who had finally succeeded in coming to Bonaparte, is so extraordinary and so peculiar in its terseness of style, in its expressions of political sentiment; it furnishes so important a testimony of the republican democratic opinions of the young twenty-six-year-old general, that we cannot but give here this document.

Bonaparte then dictated to his friend Junot as follows:

"To the representatives Salicetti and Albitte:

"You have deprived me of my functions, you have arrested me and declared me suspected.

"I am, then, ruined without being condemned; or else, which is much more correct, I am condemned without being heard.

"In a revolutionary state exist two classes: the suspected and the patriots.

"When those of the first class are accused, they are treated as the common law of safety provides.

"The oppression of those of the second class is the ruin of public liberty. The judge must condemn only after mature deliberation, and when a series of unimpeachable facts reaches the guilty.

"To denounce a patriot as guilty is a condemnation which deprives him of what is most dear—confidence and esteem.

"In which class am I to be ranked?

"Have I not been, since the beginning of the revolution, faithful to its principles?

"Have I not always been seen at war with enemies at home, or as a soldier against the foreign foe?

"I have sacrificed my residence in my country and my property to the republic; I have lost all for her.

"By serving my country with some distinction at Toulon and in the Italian army, I have had my share in the

laurels which that army has won at Saorgio, Queille, and Tanaro.

"At the time of the discovery of Robespierre's conspiracy, my conduct was that of a man who is accustomed to recognize principles only.

"It is therefore impossible to refuse me the title of patriot.

"Why, then, am I declared suspect without being heard? Why am I arrested eight days after the news of the death of the tyrant?

"I am declared suspect, and my papers are sealed!

"The reverse ought to have taken place: my papers ought to have been unsealed; I ought to have been tried; explanations ought to have been sought for, and then I might have been declared suspect if there were sufficient motives for it.

"It is decided that I must go to Paris under a warrant of arrest which declares me suspect. In Paris they will conclude that the representatives have acted thus only after sufficient examination, and I shall be condemned with the sympathy which a man of that class deserves.

"Innocent, patriotic, slandered, whatever may be the measures which the committee take, I cannot complain.

"If three men were to declare that I have committed a crime, I could not complain if the jury should declare me guilty.

"Salicetti, you know me. Have you, during the five years of our acquaintance, found in my conduct any thing which could be suspected as against the revolution?

"Albitte, you know me not. No one can have given you convincing evidence against me. You have not heard me; you know, however, with what smoothness calumny oftentimes whispers.

"Must I then be taken for an enemy of my country? Must the patriots ruin, without any regard, a general who

has not been entirely useless to the republic? Must the representatives place the government under the necessity of acting unjustly and impolitically?

"Mark my words; destroy the oppression which binds me down, and re-establish me in the esteem of the patriots.

"If, then, at some future hour, the wicked shall still long for my life, well, then I consider it of so little importance—I have so often despised it—yes, the mere thought that it can be useful to the country, enables me to bear its burden with courage." *

Whether these energetic protestations of Bonaparte, or whether some other motives, conduced to the result, Salicetti thought that with Napoleon's arrest he had furnished sufficient proof of his patriotic sentiments; it seemed to him enough to have obscured the growing fame of the young general, and to have plunged back into obscurity and forgetfulness him whose first steps in life's career promised such a radiant and glorious course!

It matters not, however, what circumstances may have wrought out; the representatives Salicetti and Albitte issued a decree in virtue of which General Bonaparte was, after mature consideration and thorough examination of his papers, declared innocent and free from all suspicion. Consequently, Bonaparte was temporarily set at liberty; but he was suspended from his command in the Italian army, and was recalled to Paris, there to be made acquainted with his future destination.

This destination was pointed out to him in a commission as brigadier-general of infantry in the province of Vendée, there to lead on the fratricidal strife against the fanatical Chouans, the faithful adherents of the king.

Bonaparte refused this offer—first, because it seemed to

* Bourienne, "Mémoires sur Napoleon," etc., vol. i., p. 63.

him an insulting request to ask him to fight against his own countrymen; and secondly, because he did not wish to enter the infantry service, but to remain in the artillery.

The Committee of Safety responded to this refusal of Bonaparte by striking his name from the list of generals appointed for promotion, because he had declined to go to the post assigned him.

This decision fell upon the ambitious, heroic young man like a thunderbolt. He had dreamed of brilliant war deeds, of laurels, of fame, of a glorious future, won for him by his own sword; and now, all at once, he saw himself dragged away from this luminous track of fame upon which he had so brilliantly entered—he saw himself thrust back into obscurity, forgetfulness, and inactivity.

A gloomy, misanthropic sentiment took possession of him; and, though a prophetic voice within said that the future still belonged to him, with its fame, its laurels, its victories, yet inactivity, care, and the wants of the present, hung with oppressive weight upon his mind.

He withdrew from all social joys and recreations, he avoided his acquaintances, and only to a few friends did he open his foreboding heart; only with these did he associate, and to them alone he made his complaints of broken hopes, of life's career destroyed.

To these few friends, whom Bonaparte in his misfortune found faithful and unchanged, belonged the Permont family, and above all belonged Junot, who had come to Paris at the same time as Bonaparte, and who, though the latter was dismissed from the service, continued to call himself the adjutant of General Bonaparte.

In the Permont family Napoleon was received with the same friendship and attention as in former days; Madame de Permont retained ever for the son of the friend of her youth, Letitia, a kindly smile, a genial sympathy, an intelli-

gent appreciation of his plans and wishes; her husband manifested toward him all the interest of a parental regard; her son Albert was full of tenderness and admiration for him; and her younger daughter Laura jested and conversed with him as with a beloved brother.

In this house every thing seemed pleasant and friendly to Bonaparte; thither he came every day, and mixed with the social circles, which gathered in the evening in the drawing-rooms of the beautiful, witty Madame de Permont; and where men even of diverging political sentiments, aristocrats and *ci-devants* of the first water, were to be found. But Madame de Permont had forbidden all political discussion in her saloon; and General Bonaparte, now compelled to inactivity, dared no more show his anger against the Committee of Safety, or against the Convention, than the Count de Montmorency or any of the proud ladies of the former quarter of St. Germain.

Not only the inactivity to which he was condemned, not only the destruction of all his ambitious hopes, burdened the mind of Bonaparte, but also the material pressure under which he now and then found himself, and which seemed to him a shame and a humiliation. With gloomy grudge he gazed at those young *élégants* whom he met on the Boulevards in splendid toilet, on superb horses—at these *incroyables* who, in the first rays of the sun of peace, from the soil of the republic, yet moist with blood, had sprung up as so many mushrooms of divers colors and varied hues.

"And such men enjoy their happiness!" exclaimed Bonaparte, contemptuously, as once in the *Champs Elysées* he sat before a coffee-house, near one of those *incroyables*, and with violent emotion starting up, he pushed his seat back and nearly broke the feet of his exquisitely dressed neighbor.

To be forgotten, to be set in the background, to be limited in means, was always to him a source of anger, which

manifested itself now in impassioned vehemence, now in vague, gloomy dreaminess, from which he would rise up again with some violent sarcasm or some epigrammatic remark.

But whilst he thus suffered, was in want, and had so much to endure, his mind and heart were always busy. His mind was framing new plans to bring to an end these days of inactivity, to open a new path of fame and glory; his heart dreamed of a sweet bliss, of another new love!

The object of this love was the sister of his brother's wife, the young Désirée Clary. Joseph Bonaparte, who was now in Marseilles as war-commissioner, had married there one of the daughters of the rich merchant Clary; and her younger sister Désirée was the one to whom Napoleon had devoted his heart. The whole Bonaparte family was now in Marseilles, and had decided to make their permanent residence in France, as their return to Corsica was still impossible; for General Paoli, no longer able to hold the island, had called the English to his help, and the assembled *Consulta*, over which Paoli presided, had invited the King of England to become sovereign of the island. The French party, at whose head had been the Bonaparte family, was overcome, and could no longer lift up head or voice.

Bonaparte came often to Marseilles to visit his family, which consisted of his mother Letitia, her three daughters, her two younger sons, and her brother, the Abbé Fesch. There, he had seen every day, in the house of his brother, Désirée Clary, and the beautiful, charming maid had not failed to leave in the heart of the young general a deep impression. Désirée seemed to return this inclination, and a union of the two young lovers might soon have taken place, if fate, in the shape of accident, had not prevented it.

Joseph was sent by the Committee of Safety to Genoa, with instructions; his young wife and her sister Désirée accompanied him. Perhaps the new, variable impressions of

the journey, perhaps her separation from Bonaparte, and her association with other officers less gloomy than the saturnine Napoleon, all this seemed to cool the love of Désirée Clary; she no more answered Napoleon's letters, and, in writing to his brother Joseph, he made bitter complaints: "It seems that to reach Genoa the River Lethe must first be crossed, and therefore Désirée writes no more."*

The only confidant to whom Bonaparte imparted these heart-complaints, was Junot. He had for him no secrecy of his innermost and deepest inclinations; to him he complained with grave and impassioned words of Désirée's changeableness; and Junot, whose worshipful love for his friend could not understand that any maiden, were she the most beautiful and glorious on earth, could ever slight the inclination of General Bonaparte, Junot shared his wrath against Désirée, who had begun the rupture between them by leaving unanswered two of Napoleon's letters.

After having been angry and having complained in concert with Bonaparte, Junot's turn to be confidential had come. Bewildered, and blushing like a young maid, he avowed to his dear general that he also loved, and that he could hope for happiness and joy only if Napoleon's younger sister, the beautiful little Pauline, would be his wife.

Bonaparte listened to him with a frowning countenance, and when Junot ended by asking his mediation with Pauline's mother, Napoleon asked in a grave tone, "But, what have you to live upon? Can you support Pauline? Can you, with her, establish a household which will be safe against want?"

Junot, radiant with joy, told him how, anticipating this question of Napoleon, he had written to his father, and had asked for information in regard to his means; and that his father had just now answered his questions, and had re-

* See "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i.

plied that for the present he could not give him anything, but that after his death the inheritance of his son would amount to twenty thousand francs.

"I shall be one day rich," exclaimed Junot, gayly, as he handed to Napoleon the letter of his father, "for with my pay I will have an income of twelve hundred livres. My general, I beseech you, write to the Citoyenne Bonaparte; tell her that you have read the letter of my father, and say a good word in my favor."

Bonaparte did not at once reply. He attentively read the letter of Junot, senior, then returned it to his friend, and with head sunk down upon his breast he stared gloomily, with contracted eyebrows.

"You answer not, general," exclaimed Junot, in extreme anguish. "You do not wish to be my mediator?"

Bonaparte raised his head; his cheeks were paler than before, and a gloomy expression was in his eyes.

"I cannot write to my mother to make her this proposition," said he, in a rough, severe tone. "That is impossible, my friend. You say that one day you will have an income of twelve hundred livres. That is, indeed, very fair, but you have them not now. Besides, your father's health is remarkably good, and he will make you wait a long time. For the present you have nothing; for your lieutenant's epaulets can be reckoned as nothing. As regards Pauline, she has not even that much. Let us then sum up: you have nothing; she has nothing! What is the total amount? Nothing. You cannot, therefore, be married now: let us wait. We shall, perhaps, friend, outlive these evil days. Yes, we shall outlive them, even if I have to become an exile, to seek for them in another portion of the world! Let us, then, wait!" *

And a wondrous, mysterious brilliancy and flash filled

* Bonaparte's words.—See Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 284.

the eyes of General Bonaparte, as with a commanding voice he repeated, "Let us wait!"

Was this one of those few and pregnant moments in which the mind with prophetic power gazes into the future? Had a corner of the veil which hid the future been lifted up before the glowing eagle-eye of Napoleon, and did he see the splendor and the glory of that future which were to be his? However great his imagination, however ambitious his dreams, however wide his hopes, yet they all were to be one day surpassed by the reality. For would he not have considered a madman him who, at this hour, would have told him: "Smooth the furrows on your brow, Bonaparte; be not downcast about the present. You are now in want, you are thrust aside; forgetfulness and obscurity are now your lot; but be of good cheer, you will be emperor, and all Europe will lie trembling at your feet. You love the young Désirée Clary, and her indifference troubles you; but be of good cheer, you will one day marry the daughter of a Cæsar, and the little Désirée, the daughter of a merchant from Marseilles, will one day be Sweden's queen! You refuse to Junot, your friend, the gratification of his wishes, because he possesses nothing but his officer's epaulets: but be of good cheer, for you will one day convert the little Lieutenant Junot into a duke, and give him a kingdom for a dowry! You feel downhearted and ashamed, because your sister Pauline is not rich, because she possesses nothing but her beauty and her name: but be of good cheer, she will one day be the wife of the wealthiest prince of Italy; all the treasures of art will be gathered in her palace, and yet she will be the most precious ornament of that palace!"

Surely the General Bonaparte would have laughed at the madman, who, in the year 1795, should have thus spoken to him—and yet a mere decade of years was to suffice for the realization of all these prophecies, and to turn the incredible into a reality.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE THIRTEENTH VENDÉMIAIRE.

THE days of terror, and of blood, under which France has sighed so long, were not to end with the fall of Robespierre. Another enemy of the rest and peace of France had now made its entrance into Paris—hunger began to exercise its dreary rule of horror, and to fill the hearts of men with rage and despair.

Everywhere throughout France the crops had failed, and the republic had too much to do with the guillotine, with the political struggles in the interior, with the enemies on the frontier, she had been so busy with the heads of her children, that she could have no care for the welfare of their stomachs.

The corn-magazines were empty, and in the treasury of the republican government there was no money to buy grain in foreign markets. Very soon the want of bread, the cry for food, made itself felt everywhere; soon hunger goaded into new struggles of despair the poor Parisian people, already so weary with political storms, longing for rest, and exhausted by conflicts. Hunger drove them again into politics, hunger converted the women into demons, and their husbands into fanatical Jacobins. Every day, tumults and seditious gatherings took place in Paris; the murmuring and howling crowd threatened to rise up. Every day appeared at the bar of the Convention the sections of Paris, entreating with wild cries for a remedy for their distress. At every step in the streets one was met by intoxicated women, who tried to find oblivion of their hunger in wine, and to whom, notwithstanding their drunkenness, the consciousness of their calamity remained. These drunken women, with the gestures of madness, shouted: "Bread! give us bread! We had bread at least in the year '93!

Bread! Down with the republic! Down with the Convention, which leaves us to starve!"

To these shouts responded other masses of the people: "Down with the constitutionalists! Long live the Mountain! Long live the Convention!"

Civil war, which in its exhaustion had remained subdued for a moment, threatened to break out with renewed rage, for the parties stood face to face in determined hostility, and "Down with the constitutionalists!—down with the republicans!" was the watchword of these parties.

For a moment it seemed as if the Mountain, as if the revolution, would regain the ascendency, as if the terrorists would once more seize the rudder which had slipped from their blood-stained hands. But the Convention, which for a time had remained undecided, trembling and vacillating, rose at length from its lethargy to firm, energetic measures, and came to the determination to restore peace at any price.

The people, stirred up by the terrorists, the furious men of the Mountain, had to be reduced to silence, and the cry, "Long live the constitution of '93!—down with the Convention!"—this cry, which every day rolled on through the streets of Paris like the vague thunderings of the war-drum, —had to be put down by armed force. Barrere, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, the remnant of the sanguinary administration of Robespierre, the terrorists who excited the people against the Convention, who pressed on the Thermidorists, and wanted to occupy their place, these were the ones who with their adherents and friends threatened the Convention and imperilled its existence. The Convention rose up in its might and punished these leaders of sedition, so as through fear and horror to disperse the masses of the people.

Barrere, Collot d'Herbois, and Billaud Varennes, were arrested and sent to Cayenne; six of their friends, six re-

publicans and terrorists, were also seized, and as they were convicted of forging plots against the Convention and the actual administration, they were sentenced to death. A seventh had also been at the head of this conspiracy; and this seventh one, who with the others had been sentenced to death, and whom the Committee of Safety had watched for everywhere, to bring down upon him the chastisement due, this seventh one was Salicetti—the same Salicetti who after the fall of Robespierre had arrested General Bonaparte as suspect. Bonaparte had never forgiven him, and though he often met him in the house of Madame de Permont, and appeared to be reconciled with him, yet he could not forget that he was the one who had stopped him in the midst of his course of fame, that it was he who had debarred him from his whole career.

"Salicetti has done me much harm," said Bonaparte to Madame de Permont, and a strange look from his eyes met her face—"Salicetti has destroyed my future in its dawn. He has blighted my plans of fame in their bud. I repeat, he has done me much harm. He has been my evil spirit. I can never forget it," but added he, thoughtfully, "I will now try to forgive."*

And again a peculiar, searching look of his eyes met the face of Madame de Permont.

She, however, turned aside, she avoided his look, for she dared not tell him that Salicetti, for whom the Convention searched throughout Paris so as to bring upon him the execution of his death-warrant—that Salicetti, whom Bonaparte so fiercely hated, was hid a few steps from him in the little *cabinet* near the drawing-room.

Like Bonaparte, Salicetti was the countryman of Madame de Permont; in the days of his power, he had saved the husband and the son of Panonia from the persecution of

* Abrantes, vol. i, p. 300.

the terrorists, and he had now come to ask safety from those whom he had once saved.

Madame de Permont had not had the courage to refuse an asylum to Salicetti; she kept him secreted in her house for weeks; and during all these weeks, Bonaparte came daily to visit Madame de Permont and her children, and every day he turned the conversation upon Salicetti, and asked if they knew not yet where he was secreted. And every time, when Madame de Permont answered him in the negative, he gazed at her with a piercing look, and with his light, sarcastic smile.

Meanwhile Salicetti's danger for himself, and those who secreted him, increased every day, and Madame de Permont resolved to quit Paris. The sickness of her husband, who was in Toulon, furnished her with the welcomed opportunity of a journey. She made known to the friends and acquaintances who visited her house, and especially to Bonaparte, that she had received a letter from the physician in Toulon, requesting her presence at her husband's bed of sickness. Bonaparte read the letter, and again the same strange look met the face of Madame de Permont.

"It is, indeed, important," said he, "that you should travel, and I advise you to do so as soon as possible. Fatal consequences might ensue to M. de Permont, were you to delay any longer in going to Toulon."

Madame de Permont made, therefore, all her arrangements for this journey. Salicetti, disguised as a servant, was to accompany her. Bonaparte still came as usual every day, and took great interest in the preparations for her journey, and conversed with her in the most friendly and pleasant manner. On the day of departure, he saluted her most cordially, assured her of his true, unswerving attachment, and, with a final, significant look, expressed a wish that her journey might be accomplished without danger.

When Madame de Permont had overcome all difficulties,

and she and her daughter had left Paris and passed the *barrière*, as the carriage rolled on without interruption (Salicetti, disguised as a servant, sitting near the postilion on the driver's seat), the housemaid handed to her a letter which General Bonaparte had given her, with positive orders to hand it to her mistress only when they should be beyond the outer gates of Paris.

The letter ran thus: "I have never been deceived: I would seem to be in your estimation, if I did not tell you that, for the last twenty days, I knew that Salicetti was secreted in your house. Remember what I told you on the first day, Prairial, Madame de Permont—I had then the mental conviction of this secrecy. Now it is a matter of fact.—Salicetti, you see I could have returned to you the wrong which you perpetrated against me, and by so doing I should have revenged myself, whilst you wronged me without any offence on my part. Who plays at this moment the nobler part, you or I? Yes, I could have revenged myself, and I have not done it. You will, perhaps, say that your benefactress acted as a protecting shield. That is true, and it also is taken into consideration. Yet, even without this consideration, such as you were—alone, disarmed, sentenced—your head would even then have been sacred to me. Go, seek in peace a refuge where you can rise to nobler sentiments for your country. My mouth remains closed in reference to your name, and will no more utter it. Repent, and, above all things, do justice to my intentions. I deserve it, for they are noble and generous.

"Madame de Permont, my best wishes accompany you and your daughter. You are two frail beings, without protection. Providence and prayers will accompany you. Be prudent, and during your journey never stop in large towns. Farewell, and receive the assurance of my friendship." *

* Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 351.

The nobility of mind which Bonaparte displayed toward his enemy was soon to receive its reward; for, whilst Salicetti, a fugitive, sick, and sentenced to death, was compelled to remain hidden, Bonaparte was emerging from the oblivion to which the ambitious zeal of Salicetti would have consigned him.

When Napoleon, dismissed from his position, arrived in Paris, and appealed to Aubry, the chief of the war department, to be re-established in his command, he was told: "Bonaparte is too young to command an army as general-in-chief;" and Bonaparte answered: "One soon becomes old on the battle-field, and I come from it." *

But Aubry, in his functions of chief of the war department, was soon superseded by the representative Douclet de Ponté-Coulant, and this event gave to the position of the young general a different aspect. Ponté-Coulant had for some time followed with attention the course of the young general, whose military talents and warlike reputation had filled him with astonishment. He had especially been surprised at the plan for the conduct of the war and the conquest of Italy which Bonaparte had laid before the war committee. Now that Ponté-Coulant had been promoted to be chief of the war department, he sent for General Bonaparte, and attached him to the topographic committee, where the plans of campaigns were decided and the movements of each separate corps delineated.

The forgotten one, doomed to inactivity, General Napoleon Bonaparte, now arose from his obscurity, and before him again opened life, the world, and fame's pathway, which was to lead him up to a throne. But the envy and jealousy of the party-men of the Convention ever threw obstacles before him on his glorious course, and the war-scheme which he now unfolded to the committee for the

* Norvins, "Histoire de Napoléon," vol. i., p. 60.

campaign did not receive the approbation of the successor of Ponté-Coulant in the war department, and it was thrust aside. A new political crisis was needed to place in the hands of Napoleon the command of the army, the ruling authority over France, and this crisis was at hand.

Paris, diseased, still bleeding in its innermost life with a thousand wounds, was devoured by hunger. The unfortunate people, wretched from want and pain, during many past years, were now driven to despair. The political party leaders understood but too well how to take advantage of this, and to prey upon it. The royalists were busy instilling into the people's minds the idea that the return of the Bourbons would restore to miserable France peace and happiness. The terrorists told the people that the Convention was the sole obstacle to their rest and to their peace, that it was necessary to scatter it to the winds, and to re-establish the Constitution of 1793. The whole population of Paris was divided and broken into factions, struggling one against the other with infuriated passions. The royalists, strengthened by daily accessions of emigrants, who, under fictitious names and with false passports, returned to Paris to claim the benefit of the milder laws passed in their favor, constituted a formidable power in that city. Whole sections were devoted to them, and were secretly supplied by them with arms and provisions, so as finally to be prepared to act against the Convention. An occasion soon presented itself.

The Convention had, through eleven of its committee members, prepared a new constitution, and had laid it before the people for adoption or rejection, according to the majority of votes. The whole country, with the exception of Paris, was in favor of this new constitution—she alone in her popular assemblies rejected it, declared the Convention dissolved, and the armed sections arose to make new elections. The Convention declared these assemblies to be illegal, and

ordered their dissolution. The armed sections made resistance, congregated together, and by force opposed the troops of the Convention—the National Guards—commanded by General Menou. On the 12th Vendémiaire all Paris was under arms again; barricades were thrown up by the people, who swore to die in their defence sooner than to submit to the will of the Convention; the noise of drums and trumpets was heard in every street; all the horrors and cruelties of a civil war once more filled the capital of the revolution, and the city was drunk with blood!

The people fought with the courage of despair, pressed on victoriously, and won from General Menou a few streets; whole battalions of the National Guards abandoned the troops of the Convention and went over to the sections. General Menou found himself in so dangerous a position as to be forced to conclude an armistice until the next day with the Section Lepelletier, which was opposed to him, up to which time the troops on either side were to suspend operations.

The Section Lepelletier declared itself at once *en permanence*, sent her delegates to all the other sections, and called upon "the sovereign people, whose rights the Convention wished to usurp," to make a last and decisive struggle.

The Convention found itself in the most alarming position; it trembled for its very existence, and already in fancy saw again the days of terror, the guillotine rising and claiming for its first victims the heads of the members of the Convention. A pallid fear overspread all faces as constantly fresh news of the advance of the sections reached them, when General Menou sent news of the concluded armistice.

At this moment a pale young man rushed into the hall of session, and with glowing eloquence and persuasive manner entreated the Convention not to accept the armistice, not to give time to the sections to increase their strength,

nor to recognize them as a hostile power to war against the government.

This pale young man—whose impassioned language filled the minds of all his hearers with animosity against General Menou, and with fresh courage and desire to fight—was Napoleon Bonaparte.

After he had spoken, other representatives rushed to the tribune, to make propositions to the Assembly, all their motions converging to the same end—all desired to have General Menou placed under arrest, and Bonaparte appointed in his place, and intrusted with the defence of the Convention and of the legislative power against the people.

The Assembly accepted this motion, and appointed Bonaparte commanding officer of the troops of the Convention, and, for form's sake, named Barras, president of the Convention, commander-in-chief.

Bonaparte accepted the commission; and now, at last, after so much waiting, so many painful months of inactivity, he found himself called to action; he stood again at the head of an army, however small it might be, and could again lift up the sword as the signal for the march to the fight.

It is true this fight had a sad, horrible purpose; it was directed against the people, against the sections which declared themselves to be the committee of the sovereign people, and that they were fighting the holy fight of freedom against those who usurped their rights.

General Bonaparte had refused to go to Vendée, because he wished not to fight against his own countrymen, and could not take part in a civil war; but now, at this hour of extreme peril, he placed himself in opposition to the people's sovereignty, and assumed command over the troops of the Convention, whose mission it was to subdue the people.

Every thing now assumed a more earnest attitude; during the night the newly-appointed commanding officer sent

three hundred chasseurs, under Murat, to bring to Paris forty cannon from the park of artillery in Sablons, and, when the morning of the 13th Vendémiaire began to dawn, the pieces were already in position in the court of the Tuileries and pointed against the people. Besides which, General Bonaparte had taken advantage of the night to occupy all the important points and places, and to arm them; even into the hall of session of the Convention he ordered arms and ammunition to be brought, that the representatives might defend themselves, in case they were pressed upon by the people.

As the sun of the 13th Vendémiaire rose over Paris, a terrible street-fight began—the fight of the sovereign people against the Convention. It was carried on by both sides with the utmost bitterness and fierceness, the sections rushing with fanatic courage, with all the energy of hatred, against these soldiers who dared slay their brothers and bind their liberty in chains; the soldiers of the Convention fought with all the bitterness which the consciousness of their hated position instilled into them.

The cannon thundered in every street and mingled their sounds with the cries of rage from the *sectionnaires*—the howlings of the women, the whiz of the howitzers, the loud clangs of the bells, which incessantly called the people to arms. Streams of blood flowed again through the streets; everywhere, near the scattered barricades, near the houses captured by storm, lay bloody corpses; everywhere resounded the cries of the dying, the shrieks and groans of the wounded, the wild shouts of the combatants. In the Church of St. Roche, and in the Théâtre Française, the sectionnaires, driven from the neighboring streets by the troops of General Bonaparte, had gathered together and endeavored to defend these places with the courage of despair. But the howitzers of Bonaparte soon scattered them, and the contest was decided.

The sections were defeated; the people, conquered by the Convention, had to recognize its authority; they were no more the sovereigns of France; they had found a ruler before whom they must bow.

This ruler was yet called the Convention, but behind the Convention stood another ruler—General Bonaparte!

It was he who had defeated the people, who had secured the authority to the Convention, and it was therefore natural that it should be thankful and exhibit its gratitude. General Bonaparte, in acknowledgment for the great services done to his country, was by the Convention appointed commander-in-chief of the army of the interior, and thus suddenly he saw himself raised from degrading obscurity to pomp and influence, surrounded by a brilliant staff, installed in a handsome palace by virtue of his office as chief officer, entitled to and justified in maintaining an establishment wherein to represent worthily the dignity of his new position.

The 13th Vendémiaire, which dethroned the sovereign people, brought General Bonaparte a step nearer to the throne.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WIDOW JOSEPHINE BEAUHARNAIS.

Meanwhile Josephine had passed the first months of her newly-obtained freedom in quiet contentment with her children in Fontainebleau, at the house of her father-in-law. Her soul, bowed down by so much misery and pain, needed quietness and solitude to allow her wounds to cease bleeding and to heal; her heart, which had experienced so much anguish and so many deceptions, needed to rest on the bosom of her children and her relatives, so as to be quickened into

new life. Only in the solitude and stillness of Fontainebleau did she feel well and satisfied; every other distraction, every interruption of this quiet, orderly existence brought on a nervous trembling, which mastered her whole body, as if some other adversity was about to break upon her. The days of terror which she had passed in Paris, and especially the days she had outlived in prison, were ever fresh before her mind, and tormented her with their reminiscences alike in her vigils and in her dreams.

She wanted to hear nothing of the world's events, nothing from Paris, the mention of which place filled her with fear and horror; and with tears in her eyes she entreated her father-in-law to omit all mention of the political changes and revolutions which took place there.

But, alas! the politics from which Josephine fled, to which she closed her ears, rushed upon her against her will —they came to her in the shape of want and privation.

Josephine, who wished to have nothing more to do with the affairs of this world, learned, through the deprivations which she had to endure, the want to which she and her family were exposed, that the world had not yet been pushed back into the old grooves, out of which the revolution had so violently lifted it up; that the republic yet exercised a despotic authority, and was not prepared to return to the heirs the property of the victims of the guillotine! The income and property of General Beauharnais had all been confiscated by the republic, for he had been executed as a state criminal, and the procedure had this in common with the ordinary actions of the government, that it never returned what it had once usurped. Even Josephine's father-in-law, as well as her aunt—Madame de Renaudin, who, after her husband's death, had been married to the Marquis de Beauharnais—had both in the revolutionary storms lost all their property, and saw themselves reduced to the last extremity. They lived from day to day with the greatest economy, upon

the smallest means, and flattered themselves with the hope that justice would be done to the innocent victims of the revolution; that at last to the widow and children of the murdered General Beauharnais his income and property would be returned.

Another hope remained to Josephine: reliance upon her relatives, especially upon her mother in Martinique. She had written to her as soon as she had obtained her liberty; she had entreated her mother, who had been a widow for two years, to rent all her property in Martinique, and to come to France, and at her daughter's side to enjoy a few quiet years of domestic happiness.

But this hope also was to be destroyed, for the revolution in Martinique had committed the same devastations as in France, and the burning houses of their masters had been the bonfires whose flames were sent up to heaven by the newly-freed slaves in the name of the republic and of the rights of man. Madame Tascher de la Pagerie had experienced the same fate as all the planters in Martinique; her house and outbuildings had been burnt, her plantations destroyed, and a long time would be required before the fields could again be made to produce a harvest. Until then, Madame Tascher would be sorely limited in her means, and, if she did not succeed in selling some of her property and raising funds, would be without the money necessary to bring under cultivation the remnant of her large plantation. She was, therefore, not immediately prepared to supply her daughter with any considerable assistance, and Josephine endured the anguish of seeing not only herself and children, but also her dear mother, suffer through want and privation.

To the need of gold to procure bare necessaries, was soon added the very lack of them. Famine, with all its horrors, was at hand; the people were clamoring for food, and the land-owners as well as the rich were suffering from the want of that prime necessary of life—bread! The Convention

had adopted no measures to satisfy the demands of the howling populace, and it had to remain contented with making accessible to all such provisions as were in the land. One law, therefore, ordered all land-owners to deliver to the state their stores of meal; a second law prohibited any person from buying more than one pound of bread on the same day. The greatest delicacy in those days of common wretchedness was white bread, and there were many families that for a long time were unable to procure this luxury.

Josephine herself had with many others to endure this privation: the costly white loaf was beyond her reach. In her depressed and sad lot the unfortunate widowed viscountess remained in possession of a treasure for which many of the wealthy and high-born longed in vain, and which neither gold nor wealth could procure—Josephine possessed friends, true, devoted friends, who forsook her not in the day of need, but stood the more closely at her side, helping and loving.

Among these friends were, above all, Madame Dumoulin and M. Emery. Madame Dumoulin, the wife of a wealthy purveyor of the republican army, was at heart a true royalist, and had made it her mission, as much as was within her power, to assist with her means the most destitute from whom the revolution had taken their family joys and property. She aided with money and clothing the unfortunate emigrants, who, as prominent and influential friends of the king and of Old France, had abandoned their country, and who now, as nameless, wretched beggars, returned home to beg of New France the privilege at least to hunger and starve, and at last to die in their motherland. Madame Dumoulin had always an open house for those aristocrats and *ci-devants* who had the courage not to emigrate and to bow their despised heads to all the fluctuations of the republic, and had remained in France, though deprived by the republic of their ancestral names, property, and rank. Those

aristocrats who had not migrated found a friendly reception in the house of the witty and amiable Madame Dumoulin, and twice a week she gathered those friends of the *ancien régime* to a dinner, which was prepared with all the luxury of former days, and which offered to her friends, besides material enjoyment, the pleasures of an agreeable and attractive company.

Among Madame Dumoulin's friends who never failed to be present at these dinners was Josephine de Beauharnais, of whom Madame Dumoulin said she was the sunbeam of her drawing-room, for she warmed and vitalized all hearts. But this sunbeam had not the power to bring forth out of the unfruitful soil of the fatherland a few ears of wheat to turn its flour into white bread. As every one was allowed to buy bread only according to the numbers in the household, Madame Dumoulin could not give to her guests at dinner any white bread, and on her cards of invitation was the then usual form, "You are invited to bring a loaf of white bread."

But it was beyond the means of the poor Viscountess de Beauharnais to fulfil this invitation; her purse was not sufficient to afford her twice a week the luxury of white bread. Madame Dumoulin, who knew this, came kindly to the rescue of Josephine's distress, and entreated her not to trouble herself with bringing bread, but to allow her to procure it for her friend.

Josephine accepted this offer with tears of emotion, and she never forgot the goodness and kindness of Madame Dumoulin. In the days of her highest glory she remembered her, and once, when empress, radiant with jewels and ornaments of gold, as she stood in the midst of her court, related with a bewitching smile, to the ladies around her, that there was a time when she would have given a year of her life to possess but one of those jewels, not to adorn herself therewith, but to sell it, so as to buy bread for her children, and

that in those days the excellent Madame Dumoulin had been a benefactress to her, and that she had received at her hands the bread of charity.*

The same abiding friendship was shown to Josephine by M. Emery, a banker who had a considerable business in Dunkirk, and who for many years had been in mercantile relations with the family of Tascher de la Pagerie in Martinique. Madame de la Pagerie had every year sent him the produce of her sugar plantations, and he had attended to the sale to the largest houses in Germany. He knew better than any one else the pecuniary circumstances of the Pagerie family; he knew that, if at present Madame de la Pagerie could not repay his advanced sums, her plantations would soon produce a rich harvest, and even now be a sufficient security. M. Emery was therefore willing to assist the daughter of Madame Tascher de la Pagerie, and several times he advanced to Josephine considerable sums which she had drawn upon her mother.

The cares of every-day life, its physical necessities, lifted Josephine out of the sad melancholy in which she had lulled her sick, wounded heart, within the solitude of Fontainebleau. She must not settle down in this inactive twilight, nor wrap herself up in the gloomy gray veil of widowhood! Life had still claims upon her; it called to her through her children's voices, for whom she had a future to provide, as well as through the voice of her own youth, which she must not intrust hopelessly to the gloomy Fontainebleau.

And the young mother dared not and wanted not to close her ears to these calls; she arose from her supineness, and courageously resolved to begin anew life's battle, and to claim her share from the enjoyments and pleasures of this world.

She first, by the advice of M. Emery, undertook a jour-

* "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Josephine," par Mad. Ducrest, chap. xxxvi.

ney to Hamburg, to make some arrangements with the rich and highly respectable banking-house of Mathiesen and Sissen. Mathiesen, the banker, who had married a niece of Madame de Genlis, had always shown the greatest hospitality to all Frenchmen who had applied to him, and he had assisted them with advice and deeds. To him Josephine appealed, at the request of M. Emery, so as to procure a safe opportunity to send letters to her mother in Martinique, and also to obtain from him funds on bills drawn upon her mother.

M. Mathiesen met her wishes with a generous pleasure, and through him Josephine received sufficient sums of money to protect her from further embarrassments and anxieties, at least until her mother, who was on the eve of selling a portion of her plantation, could send her some money.

On her return from her business-journey to Hamburg, as she was no longer a poor widow without means, she adopted the courageous resolution of leaving her asylum and returning to dangerous and deserted Paris, there to prepare for her son an honorable future, and endeavor to procure for her daughter an education suited to her rank and capacities.

At the end of the year 1795, Josephine returned with her two children to Paris, which one year before she had left so sorrowfully and so dispirited.

What changes had been wrought during this one year! How the face of things had been altered! The revolution had bled to death. The thirteenth Vendémiaire had scattered to the winds the seditious elements of revolution, and the republic was beginning quietly and peacefully to grow into stature. The Convention, with its Mountain, its terrorists, its Committee of Safety, its persecutions and executions, had outlived its power, which it had consigned to the pages of history with so many tears and so much blood. In

a strange contradiction with its own bloody deeds, it celebrated the last day of its existence by a law which, as a farewell to the thousand corpses it had sacrificed to the revolution, it had printed on its gory brow. On the day of its dissolution the Convention gave to France this last law: "Capital punishment is forever abolished." *

With this farewell kiss, this love-salutation to the France of the future, to the new self-informing France, the Convention dissolved itself, and in its stead came the Council of Elders, the Council of Five Hundred, and lastly the Directory, composed of five members, among whom had been elected the more eminent members of the Convention, namely, Barras and Carnot.

Josephine's first movement in Paris was to find the lovely friend whom she made in the Carmelite prison, and to whom she in some measure owed her life, to visit Therese de Fontenay and see if the heart of the beautiful, celebrated woman had in its days of happiness and power retained its remembrances of those of wretchedness and mortal fears.

Therese de Fontenay was now the wife of Tallien, who, elected to the Council of the Five Hundred, continued to play an influential and important part, and therefore had his court of flatterers and time-serving friends as well as any ruling prince. His house was one of the most splendid in Paris; the feasts and banquets which took place there reminded one, by their extravagant magnificence, of the days of ancient Rome, and that this remembrance might still be more striking, ladies in the rich, costly costumes of patrician matrons of ancient Rome appeared at those festivities not unworthy of a Lucullus. Madame Tallien—in the ample robe of wrought gold of a Roman empress, shod with light sandals, from which issued the beautiful naked feet, and the toes adorned with costly rings, her exquisitely

* Norvins, "Histoire de Napoleon," vol. i., p. 82.

moulded arms ornamented with massive gold bracelets; her short curly hair fastened together by a gold bandelet, which rose over the forehead in the shape of a diadem, bejewelled with precious diamonds; the mantle of purple, fringed with gold and placed on the shoulders—was in this costume of such a wonderful beauty, that men gazed at her with astonishment and women with envy.

And this beautiful woman, often worshipped and adored, though sometimes slandered, had amid her triumphs kept a faithful remembrance of the past. She received Josephine with the affection of a true friend. In her generosity she allowed her no time to proffer any request, but came forward herself with offers to intercede for her friend, and to use all the means at her disposal, omitting nothing that would help Josephine to recover her fortune, her lost property. With all the eagerness of true love she took the arm of her friend and led her to Tallien, and with the enchanting smile and attitude of a commanding princess she told him that he must help Josephine to become happy again, that every thing he could do for her would be rewarded by an increasing love; that if he did not do justice to Josephine, she would punish him by her anger and coldness.

Tallien listened with complacency to the praiseworthy commands of his worshipped Therese, and promised to use all his influence to have justice done to the will of the sacrificed General de Beauharnais. He himself accompanied Josephine to Barras, that she might present her application to him personally and request at his hands restitution of her property. She was received by Barras, as well as by the other four directors, with the greatest politeness; each promised to attend to her case and to return to the widow and to the children of Alexandre de Beauharnais the property which had been so unjustly taken from them.

It is true, weeks and months of waiting and uncertainty passed away, but Josephine had hope for a comforter; she

had, besides, her beautiful friend Therese Tallien, who with affectionate eloquence endeavored to instil courage into Josephine, and by her constant petitions and prayers did not allow the Directory, amid its many important affairs of government, to forget the case of the poor young widow. Therese took care also that Josephine should appear in society at the receptions and balls given by the members of the new government; and when made timid through misfortune, and depressed at heart by the uncertainty of her narrow lot, she desired to keep aloof from these rejoicings, Therese knew how to convince her that she must sacrifice her love of retirement to her children; that it was her duty to accept the invitations of the Directory, so as to keep alive their interest and favor in her behalf; and that, were she to retreat into solitude and obscurity, she would thereby imperil her future and that of her children.

Josephine submitted to this law of necessity, and appeared in society. She screened her cares and her heart-sores under the covert of smiles, she forced herself into cheerfulness, and when now and then the smile vanished from her lip and tears filled her eyes, she thought of her children, and, mastering her sorrows, she was again the beautiful, lovely woman, whose elegant manners and lively and witty conversation charmed and astonished every one.

At last, after long months of uncertainty, Therese Tallien, her face beaming with joy, came one morning to visit her friend Josephine, and presented to her a paper with a large seal, which Tallien had given her that very morning.

It was an order, signed by the five directors, instructing the administrator of the domains to relieve the capital and the property of General Beauharnais from the sequestration laid upon them, and also to remove the seals from his furniture and his movables, and to reinstate the Widow Beauharnais in possession of all the property left by her husband.

Josephine received this paper with tears of joy, and, full

of religious, devout gratitude, she fell on her knees and cried:

"I thank Thee, my God! I thank Thee! My children will no more suffer from want, and now I can give them a suitable education."

She then fell upon her friend's neck, thanking her for her faithfulness, and swore her everlasting friendship and affection.

The dark clouds which had so long overshadowed Josephine's life were now gone, and in its place dawned day, bright and clear.

But the sun which was to illumine this day with wondrous glory had not yet appeared. Therese at this hour reminded her friend of a day in prison when Josephine had assured her friends trembling for her life that she was not going to die, that she would one day be Queen of France.

"Yes," said Josephine, smiling and thoughtful, "who knows if this prophecy will not be fulfilled? To-day begins for me a new life. I have done with the past, and it will sink behind me in the abyss of oblivion. I trust in the future! It must repay me for all the tears and anxieties of my past life, and who knows if it will not erect me a throne?"

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NEW PARIS.

Yes, they were now ended, the days of sufferings and privations! The wife of General Beauharnais was no more the poor widow who appeared as a petitioner in the drawing-rooms of the members of the Directory, and often obliged, even in the worst kind of weather, to go on foot

to the festivals of Madame Tallien, because she lacked the means to pay for a cab; she was no longer the poor mother who had to be satisfied to procure inferior teachers for her children, because she could not possibly pay superior ones.

Now, as by a spell, all was changed, and gold was the magic wand which had produced it. Thanks to this talisman, the Viscountess de Beauharnais could now quit the small, remote, gloomy dwelling in which she had hitherto resided, and could again procure a house, gather society round about her, and, above all things, provide for the education of her children.

This was her dearest duty, her most important obligation, with which she busied herself even before she rented a modestly-furnished room. Her Eugene, the darling of her heart, desired like his father to devote himself to a military life, and his mother took him to a boarding-school in St. Germain, where young men of distinguished families received their education. Her twelve-year-old daughter Hortense, of whom Josephine had said, "She is my angel with the gold locks, who alone can smile away the tears from my eyes and sorrow from my heart"—Hortense entered the newly-opened educational establishment of Madame Campan, once the lady-in-waiting of Marie Antoinette. Josephine wept hot tears as she accompanied her Hortense into the boarding-school, and, embracing her blond curly-haired angel, she closely pressed her to her heart, and said:

"Judge how much I love you, my daughter, since I have the courage to leave you and to deprive myself of the greatest of my life's enjoyments! Ah, I shall be very lonesome, Hortense, but my thoughts will be with you continually—with you and your brother Eugene. Live to be an honor to your father, grow and prosper to be your mother's happiness!"

Then with a kiss she took leave of her daughter, and

comfortless and alone she returned to her solitary apartments in Paris.

During the next eight days her doors were shut; she opened them to none, not even to her friend Therese, and not once did Josephine leave her dwelling during this time, nor did she accept any of the invitations which came to her from all sides.

Her heart was yet wrapped in mourning for her separation from her children, and, with all the intensity of an affectionate mother's love, she preferred leaving her anguish to die out of itself than to suppress it with amusements and pleasures.

But after this last sorrow had been overcome, Josephine, with serenity and a smile of cheerfulness, came again from her solitude into the world which called her forth with all its voices of joy, pleasure, and flattery. And Josephine no longer closed her ears to these sweet attractive voices. She had long enough suffered, wept, fasted; now she ought to reap enjoyments, and gather her portion of this life's pleasures; now she must live! The past had set behind her, and, as one new-born or risen from the dead, Josephine walked into the world with a young maiden heart, and a mind opened to all that is beautiful, great, and good; her soul filled with visions, hopes, desires, and dreams. Out of the widow's veil came forth the young, charming creole, and her radiant eyes saluted the world with intelligent looks and an expression of the most attractive goodness.

Her next care was to procure a pleasant, convenient home suited to her rank. She purchased from the actor Talma a house which he possessed in the Street Chautereine, and where he had, during the storms of the revolution, received his friends as well as all the literary, artistic, and political notables of the day with the kindest hospitality. It was not a brilliant, distinguished hotel, no splendid building, but a small, tastefully and conveniently arranged house, with

pretty rooms, a cheerful drawing-room, lovely garden, exactly suited to have therein a quiet, agreeable, informal pastime. Josephine possessed in the highest degree the art of her sex to furnish rooms with elegance and taste, so as to make every one in them comfortable, satisfied, at ease, and cheerful.

The drawing-room of the widow of General Beauharnais became soon the central point where all her friends of former days found themselves together again, and all the remnants of the good old society found reception; where the learned, the artist, the poet, met with a refuge, there to rest for a few hours from political strife, to put aside the serpent's skin of assumed republican manners, and again assume the tone and forms of the higher society. Such drawing-rooms in these revolutionary days were extremely few; no one dared to become conspicuous; every one was reserved and quiet; every one shrank from making himself suspected of being a *ci-devant*, even if under the republican toga he left visible his dress-coat of the upper society with its embroidery of gold. Men had entirely broken with the past, wishing to deny it, and not be under the yoke of its forms and rules; it was therefore necessary, out of the chaos of the republic, to create a new world, a new society, new forms of etiquette, and new fashions. Meanwhile, until these new fashions for republican France should be found, men had recourse (so as not to go back to the days of the late monarchy of France) to the republics of olden times; the ladies dressed according to the patterns of the old statues of the deities of Greece and Rome, giving receptions in the style of ancient Greece, and banquets laid out in all the extravagant splendors of a Lucullus.

The members of the republican Directory, whose residence was in the palace of the Luxemburg, took the lead in all these neo-Grecian and neo-Roman festivities; and, whereas they loudly proclaimed that it was necessary to furnish

opportunities to the working-classes and laborers to gain money, and that it was incumbent on all to promote industry, they rivalled each other in their efforts to exhibit an extravagant pomp and a brilliant display. On reception-days of the members of the Directory the public streamed in masses toward the Luxemburg, there to admire the splendors of the five monarchs, and to rejoice that the days of the *carmagnoles*, the *sans-culottes*, the dirty blouse, and the *bonnet rouge* were at least gone by. The five directors, to the delight of the Parisian people, wore costly silk and velvet garments embroidered with gold, and on their hats, trimmed also with gold lace, waved large ostrich-plumes.

Luxury celebrated its return to Paris, after having had to secrete itself, so long from the blood-stained hands of the *sans-culottes*, in the most obscure corners of the deserted palaces of St. Germain. Pleasure, which had fled away horrified from the guillotine and from the terrorists, dared once more to show its rose-wreathed brow and smiling countenance, and here and there make its cheerful festivities resound.

Men became glad, and dared to laugh again; they came out from the stillness of their homes, which anxiety had kept closed, to search for amusement, pleasure, and recreation; but no citizen dared to be select, none dared to assume aristocratic exclusiveness. One had to be pleased with a dinner at a tavern; with a glass of ice-water in a *café*, or to take part in a public ball which was opened to every one who could pay his fee of admission; and especially in the evening the public rushed to the theatre with the same eagerness that was exhibited in the morning to reach the shops of the bakers and butchers, where each received his portion of meat or bread by producing a card signed by the circuit commissioners. In front of these shops, as well as in front of the theatres, the pressure was so great that for hours it was necessary to fall into line, and sometimes go

away dissatisfied; for the republic had yet retained the system of equality, so that the rich and the influential were not served any sooner than the poor and the unknown; there was only one exception: only one condition received distinction before the baker's shop and the theatre: it was that of the mothers of the future, those women whose external appearance revealed that they would soon bring forth a future citizen, a new soldier for the republic, which had lost so many of its sons upon the scaffold and on the battle-field.

It was so long that one had been deprived of laughter and merriment, and had walked with sad countenance and grave solemnity through the days of blood and terror, that now every occasion for hilarity was received eagerly and thankfully, and every opportunity for mirth and amusement sought out. The theatres were therefore filled every evening with an attentive, thankful audience; every jest of the actor, every part well performed, elicited enthusiastic approbation. It is true no one yet dared act any other pieces than those which had reference to the revolution, and in some shape or other celebrated the republic, accusing and vilifying the royalists. The pieces represented were—"The Perfect Equality," or else "Thee and Thou," "The Last Trial of the Queen," "Tarquin, or the Fall of the Monarchy," "Marat's Apotheosis," and similar dramas, all infused with republicanism; still, men faint at heart and satiated with the republic, hastened notwithstanding to the theatre, to enjoy an hour of recreation and merriment.

To be cheerful, happy, and joyous, seemed now to the Parisians the highest duty of life, and every thing was made subservient to it. The people had wept and mourned so long, that now, to shake off this oppressive heaviness of mind, they rushed with fanatical precipitancy into pleasure; they gave themselves up to the wildest orgies and bacchanals, and without disgust or shame abandoned themselves to the most immoral conduct. All tears were dried up as if

by magic; honest poverty began to be ashamed of itself; and the wealth so carefully hid until now, was again brought to light; even those who in the days of revolutionary terror had become rich through the property of the sacrificed victims, exposed themselves to public gaze with impunity and without shame. They plundered and adorned themselves with a wealth acquired only through cunning, treachery, and murder. Everywhere feasts, banquets, and balls, were organized; and it was an ordinary event to find in the same company the accuser and the accused, the executioner and his victim, the murderer near the daughter of the man whose head he had given over to the guillotine!

This was especially the case at the so-called victim balls (*bals à la victime*) which were given by the heirs, the sons and fathers of those who had perished by the guillotine. People gathered together in brilliant entertainments and balls to the honor and memory of the executed ones. Every one who could pay the large fee of admission to these *bals à la victime* were permitted to enter. Those who came there, not for pleasure, but to honor their dead, showed this intention by their clothing, and especially by the arrangement of their hair. To remind them that those who had been led to the guillotine had had their hair cut close, gentlemen now had theirs cut short, and the dressing of the hair *à la victime* was for gentlemen as much a fashion as the dressing of the hair *à la Titus* (the Roman emperor) was for the ladies. Besides this, the heirs of the victims wore some token of the departed ones, and ladies and gentlemen were seen in the blood-stained garments which their relatives had worn on their way to the scaffold, and which they had purchased with large sums of money from the executioner, that lord of Paris. It often happened that a lady in the blood-stained dress of her mother danced with the son of the man who had delivered her mother to the guillotine; that a son of a member of the Convention of 1793

led, in the minuet, the graceful "pas de châle," with the daughter of an emigrant marquis. The most fanatical men of the days of terror, now exalted into wealthy land-owners, led on in the gay waltz the daughters of their former landlords; and these women pressed the hand soiled with the blood of their relatives because now, as amends for their traffic in blood, they could offer future wealth and distinction.

It seemed that all Paris and all France had gone mad—that the whole nation was drunk with blood as with intoxicating wine, and wanted to stifle the voice of conscience in the horrible revelry of the saturnalia.

Josephine never took part in these public balls and festivities; never did the widow of General Beauharnais, one of the victims of the revolution, attend these *bals à la victime*, where man prided himself on his misfortune and gloried in his sorrows. The *Moniteur*—which then gave daily notices of the balls and amusements that were to take place in Paris, so as to let the world know how cheerful and happy every one felt there, and which made it its business to publish the names of the *ci-devants* and ex-nobles who had partaken in these festivities—never in its long and correct list mentions the name of the widow of General Beauharnais.

Josephine kept aloof from all these wild dissipations—these balls and banquets. She would neither dance, nor adorn herself in the memory of her husband; she would not take a part in the splendid festivities of a republic which had murdered him, and had pierced her loyal heart with the deepest wounds.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FIRST INTERVIEW.

In the midst of these joys and amusements of the new-growing Paris, the storm of the thirteenth Vendémiaire launched forth its destructive thunderbolts, and another rent was made in the lofty structure of the republic. The royalists, who had cunningly frequented these *bals à la victime*, to weave intrigues and conspiracies, found their webs scattered, and the republic assumed a new form.

Napoleon with his sword had cut to pieces the webs and snares of the royalists as well as of the revolutionists, and France had to bow to the constitution. In the Tuileries now sat the Council of the Elders; in the *Salle du Manége* sat the Five Hundred; and in the palace of Luxemburg resided the five directors of the republic.

On the thirteenth Vendémiaire Paris had passed through a crisis of its revolutionary disease; and, to prevent its falling immediately into another, it permitted the newly-appointed commander-in-chief of the army of the interior of France, General Napoleon Bonaparte, to have every house strictly searched, and to confiscate all weapons found.

Even into the house of the Viscountess de Beauharnais, in the rue Chautereine, came the soldiers of the republic to search for secreted weapons. They found there the sword of Alexandre de Beauharnais, which certainly Josephine had not hidden, for it was the chief ornament of her son's room. When Eugene, on the next Saturday, came to Paris from St. Germain, as he did every week, to pass the Sunday in his mother's house, to his great distress he saw vacant on the wall the place where the sword of his father had been hanging. With trembling voice and tears in her eyes his mother told him that General Bonaparte, the new com-

mander-in-chief, had ordered the sword to be carried away by his soldiers.

A cry of anger and of malediction was Eugene's answer; then with flaming eyes and cheeks burning with rage he rushed out, despite the supplications of his affrighted and anxious mother. Without pausing, without thinking—conscious only of this, that he must have again his father's sword, he rushed on. It was impossible, thought he, that the republic which had deprived his father of the honors due to him, his property, his money—that now, after his death, she should also take away his sword.

He must have this sword again! This was Eugene's firm determination, and this made him bold and resolute. He rushed into the palace where the general-in-chief, Bonaparte, resided, and with daring vehemence demanded an interview with the general; and, as the door-keeper hesitated, and even tried to push away the bold boy from the door of the drawing-room, Eugene turned about with so much energy, spoke, scolded, and raged so loudly and so freely, that the noise reached even the cabinet where General Bonaparte was. He opened the door, and in his short, imperious manner asked the cause of this uproar; and when the servant had told him, with a sign of the hand he beckoned the young man to come in.

Eugene de Beauharnais entered the drawing-room with a triumphant smile, and the eye of General Bonaparte was fixed with pleasure on the beautiful, intelligent countenance, on the tall, powerful figure of the fifteen-year-old boy. In that strange, soft accent which won hearts to Napoleon, he asked Eugene his business. The young man's cheeks became pallid, and with tremulous lips and angry looks, the vehement eloquence of youth and suffering, Eugene spoke of the loss he had sustained, and of the pain which had been added to it by despoiling him of the sword of his father, murdered by the republic.

At these last words of Eugene, Bonaparte's brow was overshadowed, and an appalling look met the face of the brave boy.

"You dare say that the republic has murdered your father?" asked he, in a loud, angry voice.

"I say it, and I say the truth!" exclaimed Eugene, who did not turn away his eyes from the flaming looks of the general. "Yes, the republic has murdered my father, for it has executed him as a criminal, as a traitor to his country, and he was innocent; he ever was a faithful servant of his country and of the republic."

"Who told you that it was so?" asked Bonaparte, abruptly.

"My heart and the republic itself tell me that my father was no traitor," exclaimed Eugene, warmly. "My mother loved him much, and she regrets him still. She would not do so had he been a traitor, and then the republic would not have done what it has done—it would not have returned to my mother the confiscated property of my father, but would, had he been considered guilty, have gladly kept it back."

The grave countenance of Bonaparte was overspread by a genial smile, and his eyes rested with the expression of innermost sympathy on the son of Josephine.

"You think, then, that the republic gladly keeps what it has?" asked he.

"I see that it gladly takes what belongs not to it," exclaimed Eugene, eagerly. "It has taken away my father's sword, which belonged to me, his son, and my mother has made me swear on that sword to hold my father's memory sacred, and to strive to be like him."

"Your mother is, it seems, a very virtuous old lady," said Bonaparte, in a friendly tone.

"My mother is a virtuous, young, and beautiful lady," said Eugene, sturdily; "and I am certain, general, that if

you knew her, you would not in your heart have caused her so much pain."

"She has, then, suffered much on account of this sword being taken away?" asked Bonaparte, interested.

"Yes, general, she has wept bitterly over this our loss, as I have. I cannot bear to see my mother weep; it breaks my heart. I therefore implore you to give me back my father's sword; and I swear to you that when I am a man, I will carry that sword only for the defence of my country, as my father had done."

General Bonaparte nodded kindly to the boy. "You are a brave defender of your cause," said he, "and I cannot refuse you—I must do as you wish."

He gave orders to an ordnance officer present in the room to bring General de Beauharnais's sword; and when the officer had gone to fetch it, Bonaparte, in a friendly and sympathizing manner, conversed with the boy. At last the ordnance officer returned, and handed the sword to the general.

With solemn gravity Bonaparte gave it to Eugene. "Take it, young man," said he, "but never forget that you have sworn to carry it only for the honor and defence of your country."

Eugene could not answer: tears started from his eyes, and with deep affection he pressed to his lips the recovered sword of his father.

This manifestation of true childish emotion moved Bonaparte to tender sympathy, and an expression of affectionate interest passed over his features as he offered his hand to Eugene.

"By Heaven, you are a good son," exclaimed he from his heart, "and you will be one day a good son to your country! Go, my boy, take to your mother your father's sword. Tell her that I salute her, though unknown to her—that I congratulate her in being the mother of so good and brave a son."

Such was the beginning of an acquaintance to which Josephine was indebted for an imperial crown, and, for what is still greater, an undying fame and an undying love.

Beaming with joy, Eugene returned to Josephine with his father's sword, and with all the glowing sentiments of thankfulness he related to her how kindly and obligingly General Bonaparte had received him, what friendly and affectionate words he had spoken to him, and how much forbearance and patience he had manifested to his impassioned request.

Josephine's maternal heart was sensitive and grateful for every expression of sympathy toward her son, and the goodness and forbearance of the general affected her the more, that she knew how bold and wild the boy, smarting under pain, must have been. She therefore hastened to perform a duty of politeness by calling the next day on General Bonaparte, to thank him for the kindness he had shown Eugene.

For the first time General Bonaparte stood in the presence of the woman who one day was to share his fame and greatness, and this first moment was decisive as to his and her future. Josephine's grace and elegance, her sweetness of disposition, her genial cheerfulness, the expression of lofty womanhood which permeated her whole being, and which protected her securely from any rough intrusion or familiarity; her fine, truly aristocratic bearing, which revealed at once a lady of the court and of the great world; her whole graceful and beautiful appearance captivated the heart of Napoleon at the first interview, and the very next day after receiving her short call he hastened to return it.

Josephine was not alone when General Bonaparte was announced; and when the servant named him she could not suppress an inward fear, without knowing why she was afraid. Her friends, who noticed her tremor and blush, laughed jestingly at the timidity which made her tremble

at the name of the conqueror of Paris, and this was, perhaps, the reason why Josephine received General Bonaparte with less complacency than she generally showed to her visitors.

Amid the general silence of all those present the young general (twenty-six years old) entered the drawing-room of the Viscountess de Beauharnais; and this silence, however flattering it might be to his pride, caused him a slight embarrassment. He therefore approached the beautiful widow with a certain abrupt and perplexed manner, and spoke to her in that hasty, imperious tone which might become a general, but which did not seem appropriate in a lady's saloon. General Pichegru, who stood near Josephine, smiled, and even her amiable countenance was overspread with a slight expression of scorn, as she fixed her beautiful eyes on this pale, thin little man, whose long, smooth hair fell in tangled disorder on either side of his temples over his sallow, hollow cheeks; whose whole sickly and gloomy appearance bore so little resemblance to the majestic figure of the lion to which he had been so often compared after his success of the thirteenth Vendémiaire.

"I perceive, general," suddenly exclaimed Josephine, "that you are sorry it was your duty to fill Paris once more with blood and horror. You would undoubtedly have preferred not to be obliged to carry out the bloody orders of the affrighted Convention?"

Bonaparte shrugged his shoulders somewhat. "That is very possible," said he, perfectly quiet. "But what can you expect, madame? We military men are but the automatons which the government sets in motion according to its good pleasure; we know only how to obey; the sections, however, cannot but congratulate themselves that I have spared them so much. Nearly all my cannon were loaded only with powder. I wanted to give a little lesson to the Parisians. The whole affair was nothing but the impress of my seal

on France. Such skirmishes are only the vespers of my fame." *

Josephine felt irritated, excited by the coldness with which Napoleon spoke of the slaughter of that day; and her eyes, otherwise so full of gentleness, were now animated with flashes of anger.

"Oh," cried she, "if you must purchase fame at such a price, I would sooner you were one of the victims!"

Bonaparte looked at her with astonishment, but as he perceived her flushed cheeks and flashing eyes, the sight of her grace and beauty ravished him, and a soft, pleasant smile suddenly illumined his countenance. He answered her violent attack by a light pleasantry, and with gladsome unaffectedness he gave to the conversation another turn. The small, pale, gloomy general was at once changed into a young, impassioned, amiable *cavalier*, whose countenance grew beautiful under the sparkling intelligence which animated it, and whose enchanting eloquence made his conversation attractive and lively, carrying with it the conviction of a superior mind.

After the visitors who had met that morning in Josephine's drawing-room had departed the general still remained, notwithstanding the astonished and questioning looks of the viscountess, paying no attention to her remarks about the fine weather, or her intention to enjoy a promenade. With rapid steps, and hands folded behind his back, he paced a few times to and fro the room, then standing before Josephine he fixed on her face a searching look.

"Madame," said he, suddenly, with a kind of rough tone, "I have a proposition to make: give me your hand. Be my wife!"

Josephine looked at him, half-astonished, half-irritated. "Is it a joke you are indulging in?" said she.

* Napoleon's words.—See Le Normand, vol. i., p. 214.

"I speak in all earnestness," said Bonaparte, warmly. "Will you do me the honor of giving me your hand?"

The gravity with which Bonaparte spoke, the deep earnestness imprinted on his features, convinced Josephine that the general would not condescend to indulge in a joke of so unseemly a character, and a lovely blush overspread the face of the viscountess.

"Sir," said she, "who knows if I might not be inclined to accept your distinguished offer, if, unfortunately, fate stood not in the way of your wishes?"

"Fate?" asked Bonaparte, with animation.

"Yes, fate! my general," repeated Josephine, smiling. "But let us speak no more of this. It is enough that fate forbids me to be the wife of General Bonaparte. I can say no more, for you would laugh at me."

"But you would laugh at me if you could turn me away with so vague an answer," cried Bonaparte, with vivacity. "I pray you, explain the meaning of your words."

"Well, then, general, I cannot be your wife, for I am destined to be Queen of France—yes, perhaps more than queen!"

It was now Bonaparte's turn to appear astonished and irritated, and using her own words he said, shrugging his shoulders, "Madame, is it a joke you are indulging in?"

"I speak in all earnestness," said Josephine, shaking her head. "Listen, then: a negro-woman in Martinique foretold my fortune, and as her oracular words have thus far been all fulfilled, I must conclude that the rest of her prophecies concerning me will be realized."

"And what has she prophesied to you?" asked Bonaparte, eagerly.

"She has told me: 'You will one day be Queen of France! you will be still more than queen!'"

The general was silent. He had remained standing; but now slowly paced the room a few times, his hands folded

on his back and his head inclined on his breast. Then again he stood before the viscountess, and his eyes rested upon her with a wondrous bright and genial expression.

"I bid defiance to fate," said he, somewhat solemnly. "This prophecy does not frighten me away, and in defiance of your prophetic negro-woman, I, the republican general, address my prayer to the future Queen of France: be my wife!—give me your hand."

Josephine felt almost affrighted at this pertinacity of the general, and a sentiment of apprehension overcame her as she looked into the pale, decided countenance of this man, a stranger to her, and who claimed her for his wife.

"Oh, sir," exclaimed she, with some anguish, "you offer me your hand with as much carelessness as if the whole matter were merely for a contra-dance. But I can assure you that marriage is a very grave matter, which has no resemblance whatever to a gay dance. I know it is so. I have had my sad experience, and I cannot so easily decide upon marrying a second time."

"You refuse my hand, then?" said Bonaparte, with a threatening tone.

Josephine smiled. "On the contrary, general," said she, "give me your hand and accompany me to my carriage, which has been waiting for me this long time."

"That means you dismiss me! You close upon me the door of your drawing-room?" exclaimed Bonaparte, with warmth.

She shook her head, and, bowing before him with her own irresistible grace, she said in a friendly manner: "I am too good a patriot not to be proud of seeing the conqueror of Toulon in my drawing-room. To-morrow I have an evening reception, and I invite you to be present, general."

From this day Bonaparte visited Josephine daily; she was certain to meet him everywhere. At first she sought to avoid him, but he always knew with cunning foresight how

to baffle her efforts, and to overcome all difficulties which she threw in his way. Was she at her friend Therese's, she could safely reckon that General Bonaparte would soon make his appearance and come near her with eyes beaming with joy, and in his own energetic language speak to her of his love and hopes. Was she to be present at the receptions of the five monarchs of Paris, it was General Bonaparte who waited for her at the door of the hall to offer his arm, and lead her amid the respectful, retreating, and gently applauding crowd to her seat, where he stood by her, drawing upon her the attention of all. Did she take a drive, at the accustomed hour, in the Champs Elyseés, she was confident soon to see General Bonaparte on his gray horse gallop at her side, followed by his brilliant staff, himself the object of public admiration and universal respect; and finally, if she went to the theatre, General Bonaparte never failed to appear in her *loge*, to remain near her during the performance; and when she left, to offer his arm to accompany her to her carriage.

It could not fail that this persevering homage of the renowned and universally admired young general should make a deep and flattering impression on Josephine's heart, and fill her with pride and joy. But Josephine made resistance to this feeling; she endeavored to shield herself from it by maternal love.

She sent for her two children from their respective schools, and with her nearly grown-up son on one side and her daughter budding into maidenhood on the other, she thus presented herself to the general, and with an enchanting smile said: "See, general, how old I am, with a grown-up son and daughter who soon can make of me a grandmother."

But Bonaparte with heart-felt emotion reached his hand to Eugene and said, "A man who can call so worthy a youth as this his son, is to be envied."

A cunning, smiling expression of the eye revealed to Josephine that he had understood her war-stratagem—that neither the grown-up son nor the marriageable daughter could deter him from his object.

Josephine at last was won by so much love and tenderness, but she could not yet acknowledge that the wounds of her heart were closed; that once more she could trust in happiness, and devote her life to a new love, to a new future. She shrank timidly away from such a shaping of her destiny; and even the persuasions of her friends and relatives, even of the father of her deceased husband, could not bring her to a decision.

The state of her mind is depicted in a letter which Josephine wrote to her friend Madame de Chateau Renaud, and which describes in a great measure the strange uncertainty of her heart:

"You have seen General Bonaparte at my house! Well, then, he is the one who wishes to be the father of the orphans of Alexandre de Beauharnais and the husband of his widow. 'Do you love him?' you will ask. Well, no!—'Do you feel any repugnance toward him?' No, but I feel in a state of vacillation and doubt, a state very disagreeable to me, and which the devout in religious matters consider to be the most scandalizing. As love is a kind of worship, one ought in its presence to feel animated by other feelings than those I now experience, and therefore I long for your advice, which might bring the constant indecision of my mind to a fixed conclusion. To adopt a firm course has always appeared to my creole *nonchalance* something beyond reach, and I find it infinitely more convenient to be led by the will of another.

"I admire the courage of the general; I am surprised at his ample knowledge, which enables him to speak fluently on every subject; at the vivacity of his genius, which enables him to guess at the thoughts of others before they are

expressed; but I avow, I am frightened at the power he seems to exercise over every one who comes near him. His searching look has something strange, which I cannot explain, but which has a controlling influence even upon our directors; judge, therefore, of his influence over a woman. Finally, the very thing which might please—the violence of his passion—of which he speaks with so much energy, and which admits of no doubt, that passion is exactly what creates in me the unwillingness I have so often been ready to express.

"The first bloom of youth lies behind me. Can I therefore hope that this passion, which in General Bonaparte resembles an attack of madness, will last long? If after our union he should cease to love me, would he not reproach me for what he had done? Would he not regret that he had not made another and more brilliant union? What could I then answer? What could I do? I could weep. 'A splendid remedy!' I hear you say. I know well that weeping is useless, but to weep has been the only resource which I could find when my poor heart, so easily wounded, has been hurt. Write to me a long letter, and do not fear to scold me if you think that I am wrong. You know well that every thing which comes from you is agreeable to me." *

While Josephine was writing this letter to her friend, General Bonaparte received one which produced upon him the deepest impression, though it consisted only of a few words. But these words expressed the innermost thought of his soul, and revealed to him perhaps for the first time its secret wishes.

One evening as the general, returning home from a visit to the Viscountess Josephine, entered into his drawing-room, followed by some of his officers and adjutants, he ob-

* "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Josephine," par Madame Ducrest, p. 362.

served on a large timepiece, which stood on the mantelpiece, a letter, the deep-red paper and black seal of which attracted his attention.

"Whence this letter?" asked he, with animation, of the servant-man walking before him with a silver candlestick, as he pointed to the red envelope.

But the waiter declared that he had not seen the letter, and that he knew not where it came from.

"Ask the other servants, or the porter, who brought this red letter with the black seal," ordered Bonaparte.

The servant hurried from the room, but soon returned, with the news that no one knew any thing about the letter; no one had seen it, no one knew who had placed it there.

"Well, then, let us see what it contains," said Bonaparte, and he was going to break the seal, when Junot suddenly seized his hand and tore the letter away from him.

"Do not read it, general," implored Junot; "I beseech you do not open this letter. Who knows if some of your enemies have not sent you a letter *à la* Catharine de Medicis? Who knows if it is not poisoned—that the mere touch of it may not produce death?"

Bonaparte smiled at this solicitude of his tender friend, yet he listened to his pressing alarms, and, instead of opening and reading the letter, he passed it to Junot.

"Read it yourself, if you have the courage to do so," said he, familiarly shaking his head.

Junot rapidly broke the black seal and tore the red paper. Then, fixing his eyes on it, he threw it aside, and broke into loud, merry laughter.

"Well," asked Bonaparte, "what does the letter contain?"

"A mystery, my general—nothing more than a mystery," cried Junot, presenting the letter to Bonaparte.

The letter contained but these words:

"Macbeth, you will be king.

"THE RED MAN."

Junot laughed over this mysterious note, but Bonaparte shared not in his merriment. With compressed lips and frowning brow he looked at these strange, prophetic words, as if in their characters he wanted to discover the features of him who had dared to look into the most hidden recesses of his soul; then he threw the paper into the chimney-fire, and slowly and thoughtfully paced the room, while in a low voice he murmured, "Macbeth, you will be king."

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARRIAGE.

AT last the conqueror of Toulon conquered also the heart of the young widow who had so anxiously struggled against him; at last Josephine overcame all her fears, all her terror, and, with joyous trust in the future, was betrothed to General Bonaparte. But even then, after having taken this decisive step, after love had cast away fear, even then she had not the courage to reveal to her children that she had contracted a new marriage-tie, that she was going to give to the orphans of the Viscount de Beauharnais a new father. Ashamed and timid as a young maid, she could not force herself into acknowledging to the children of her deceased husband that a new love had grown in her heart—that the mourning widow was to become again a happy woman.

Josephine, therefore, commissioned Madame de Campan to communicate this news to her Eugene and Hortense; to tell them that she desired not only to have a husband, but

also to give to her children a faithful, loving father, who had promised to their mother with sacred oaths to regard, love, and protect them as his own children.

The children of General Beauharnais received this news with tears in their eyes; they complained loudly and sorrowfully that their mother was giving up the name of their father and changing it for another; that the memory of their father would be forever lost in their mother's heart. But, through pure love for their mother, they soon dried up these tears; and when next day Josephine, accompanied by General Bonaparte, came to St. Germain, to visit Madame de Campan's institution, she met there her daughter and son, who both embraced her with the most tender affection, and, smiling under their tears, offered their hands to General Bonaparte, who, with all the sincerity and honesty of a deep, heart-felt emotion, embraced them in his arms, and solemnly promised to treat them as a father and a friend.

All Josephine's friends did not gladly give their approbation to her marriage with this small, insignificant general, as yet so little known, whose success before Toulon was already forgotten, and whose victory of the thirteenth Vendémiaire had brought him but little fame and made him many enemies.

Among the friends who in this union with Bonaparte saw very little happiness for Josephine was her lawyer, the advocate Ragideau, who for many years had been her family's agent, whose distinguished talent for pleading and whose small figure had made him known through all Paris, and of whom it was said that as a man he was but a dwarf; but as a lawyer, he was a giant.

One day, in virtue of an invitation from the Viscountess de Beauharnais, Ragideau came to the small hotel of the rue Chautereine, and sent his name to the viscountess. She received his visit, and at his entrance into her cabinet all those present retreated into the drawing-room contiguous

thereto, as they well knew that Josephine had some business transactions with her lawyer.

Only one small, pale man, in modest gray clothing, whom Ragideau did not condescend to notice, remained in the cabinet, who retired quietly within the recess of a window.

Josephine received her business agent with a friendly smile, and spoke long and in detail with him concerning a few important transactions which had reference to her approaching marriage. Then suddenly passing from the coldness of a business conversation to the tone of a friendly one, she asked M. Ragideau what the world said of her second marriage.

Ragideau shrugged his shoulders and assumed a thoughtful attitude. "Your friends, madame," said he, "see with sorrow that you are going to marry a soldier, who is younger than yourself, who possesses nothing but his salary, and therefore cannot leave the service; or, if he is killed in battle, leaves you perhaps with children, and without an inheritance."

"Do you share the opinion of my friends, my dear M. Ragideau?" asked Josephine, smiling.

"Yes," said the lawyer, earnestly, "yes, I share them—yes. I am not satisfied that you should contract such a marriage. You are rich, madame; you possess a capital which secures you a yearly income of twenty-five thousand francs; with such an income you had claims to a brilliant marriage; and I feel conscientiously obliged, as your friend and business agent, in whom you have trusted, and who has for you the deepest interest, to earnestly remonstrate with you while there is yet time. Consider it well, viscountess; it is a reckless step you are taking, and I entreat you not to do it. I speak to your own advantage. General Bonaparte may be a very good man, possibly quite a distinguished soldier, but certain it is he has only his hat and his sword to offer you."

Josephine now broke into a joyous laugh, and her beaming eyes turned to the young man there who, with his back turned to the party, stood at the window beating the panes with his fingers, apparently heedless of their conversation.

"General," cried out Josephine, cheerfully, "have you heard what M. Ragideau says?"

Bonaparte turned slowly round, and his large eyes fell with a flaming look upon the little advocate.

"Yes," said he, gravely, "I have heard all. M. Ragideau has spoken as an honest man, and every thing he has said fills me with esteem for him. I trust he will continue to be our agent, for I feel inclined to give him full confidence."

He bowed kindly to the little lawyer, who stood there bewildered and ashamed, and, offering his arm to Josephine, Bonaparte led her into the drawing-room.*

The decisive word had been spoken: Josephine de Beauharnais was now the bride of General Bonaparte. His hitherto pale, gloomy countenance was all radiant with the bright light of love and happiness. The days of solitude and privations were forgotten; the young, beautiful Désirée Clary, whom Bonaparte so much loved a few months ago, and the amiable Madame Permont, were also forgotten (and yet to the latter, in her *loge* at the theatre, as a farce between acts, he had offered his hand); all the little love-intrigues of former days were forgotten; to Josephine alone belonged his heart, her alone he loved with all the impassioned glow and depth of a first exclusive love.

But yet, now and then, clouds darkened his large pensive brow; even her smile could not always illumine the gloomy

* The little advocate Ragideau remained after this Josephine's agent. When Bonaparte had become emperor, he appointed Ragideau notary of the civil list, and always manifested the greatest interest in his behalf, and never by a word or a look did he remind him of the strange circumstance which brought about their acquaintance.—See Meneval, "Napoléon et Marie Louise," vol. i., p. 202.

expression on his features; it would happen that, plunged in deep, sad cogitations, he heard not the question which she addressed him in her remarkably soft and clear voice which Bonaparte so much loved.

His lofty pride felt humiliated and disgraced by the part he was now performing.

He was the general of the army of the interior, but beyond the frontiers of France there stood another French army, whose soldiers had not the sad mission to maintain peace and quietness at home, to fight against brothers; but an army seeking for the foe, whose blood and victories were to secure them laurels.

General Bonaparte longed to be with this army, and to obliterate the remembrance of the 13th Vendémiaire and its sad victory by brilliant exploits beyond the Alps. It was also to him a humiliating and depressing feeling to become the husband of a wealthy woman, and not bring her as a glorious gift or a wedding-present the fame and laurels of a husband.

It has often been said that Josephine obtained for her husband, as a wedding-gift, his appointment of commanding general of the army in Italy; that she procured this appointment from Barras, with whom, before her acquaintance with Bonaparte, she had been in closer relationship than that of mere friendship. Even such historians as Schlosser have accepted this calumny as truth, without taking pains to investigate whether the facts justified this supposition. In the great historical events which have shaken nations, it is really of little importance if, under the light which illumines and brings out such events, a shadow should fall and darken an individual. Even the hatred and scorn with which a nation, trodden down in the dust, curses a tyrant, and endeavors to take vengeance on his fame, ask not if the stone flung at the hated one falls upon other heads than the one aimed at.

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Not Josephine, but Bonaparte, did they wish to injure when stating she had been the beloved of Barras. It was Bonaparte whom they wished to humble and mortify, when historians published that, not to his merits, but to the petitions of his wife, he was indebted for his commission as general of the army in Italy.

But truth justifies not this calumny; and when with the light of truth the path of the widow of General Beauharnais is lighted, it will be found that this path led to solitude and quietness; that at none of the great and brilliant banquets which Barras then gave, and which in the *Moniteur* are described with so much pomp, not once is the name of Viscountess de Beauharnais mentioned; that in the numerous pasquinades and lampoons which then appeared in Paris and in all France, and in which all private life was fathomed, not once is the name of Josephine brought out, neither is there any indirect allusion to her.

Calumny has placed this stain on Josephine's brow, but truth takes it away. And that truth is, that not Josephine, but Bonaparte, was the friend of Barras; that it was not Barras, but Carnot, who promoted Bonaparte to the rank of commanding general of the army in Italy.

Carnot, the minister of war of the republic, the noble, incorruptible republican, whose character, pure, bright, and true as steel, turned aside all the darts of wickedness and calumny, which could not inflict even a wound, or leave a stain on the brilliancy of his spotless character, has given upon this point his testimony in a refutation. At a later period, when the hatred of parties, and the events of the 18th Fructidor, had forced him to flee from France, he defended himself against the accusation launched at him in the Council of the Five Hundred, which pointed him out as a traitor to the republic; and this defence gave a detailed account of the whole time of his administration, and especially what he achieved for the republic,

claiming as one of his services the appointment of Bonaparte.

"It is not true," says he, "that Barras proposed Bonaparte for the chief command of the army in Italy. I myself did it. But time was allowed to intervene, so as to ascertain whether Bonaparte would succeed before Barras congratulated himself, and then only to his confidants, that it was he who had made this proposition to the Directory. Had Bonaparte not answered the expectations, then I should have been the one to blame: then it would have been I who had chosen a young, inexperienced, intriguing man; and I who had betrayed the nation, for the other members did not interfere in war-matters; upon me all responsibility would have fallen. But as Bonaparte is victorious, then it must be Barras who appointed him! To Barras alone are the people indebted for this nomination! He is Bonaparte's protector, his defender against my attacks! I am jealous of Bonaparte; I cross him in all his plans; I lower his character; I persecute him; I refuse him all assistance; I, in all probability, am to plunge him into ruin!"—such were the calumnies which at that time filled the journals bribed by Barras.*

To Carnot, the secretary of war of the republic, did Bonaparte go, to ask of him the command of the army in Italy. But Carnot answered him, as he had already before Aubry, the minister of war, "You are too young."

"Let us put appearances and age aside," said Bonaparte, impatiently. "Alexander, Scipio, Condé, and many others, though still younger than I, marched armies to brilliant conquests, and decided the fate of whole kingdoms. I believe I have given a few proofs of what I can achieve, if

* "Response de L. N. M. Carnot, citoyen français, l'un des fondateurs de la république, et membre constitutionnel du Directoire exécutif au rapport fait sur la conjuration du 18 Fructidor au conseil des Cinq Cents."

I am set at the right place; and I burn with great longing to serve my country, to obtain victories over despots who hate France because they fear, calumniate, and envy her!"

"I know you are a good patriot," said Carnot, slowly turning his head; "I know and appreciate your services, and you may rest assured that the obstacles which I place in your path are not directed against you personally. But do you know the situation of our army? It is devoured by the quartermaster; betrayed and sold, I fear, by its general, and demoralized, notwithstanding its successes! That army needs every thing, even discipline, whilst the enemy's army has all that we need. We want nearly a miracle to be victorious. Whoever is to lead to success our disordered, famished, disorganized army must, above all things, possess its full confidence. Besides which, without further events, I cannot dismiss the commanding general, Scherer, but I must wait until some new disgrace furnishes me the right to do so. You know all. Judge for yourself."

"I have already made all these objections within my own mind," replied Bonaparte, quietly; "yet I do not despair that if you will give me your advice and assistance, I will overcome all these difficulties. Listen to me, and I will let you know my plan for the arrangement of the war, and I am convinced you will give it your sanction."

With glowing eloquence, complete clearness and assurance, and the convincing quietude of a persuaded, all-embracing, all-weighing mind, Bonaparte unfolded the daring and astounding plan of his campaign. As he spoke, his face brightened more and more, his eyes glowed with the fire of inspiration, his countenance beamed with that exalted, wondrous beauty which is granted to genius alone in the highest moments of its ecstasy; the small, insignificant, pale young man became the bold, daring hero, who was fully prepared gladly to tread a world under his feet.

Carnot, who had looked on in astonishment, was finally carried away, inspired by the persuasive eloquence of the young general, who in a few words understood how to map out battle-fields, to measure whole engagements, and to give to every one the needful and appropriate place.

"You are right," cried Carnot, delighted, and offering his hand to Bonaparte. "This plan must be carried out, and then we shall conquer our enemies. I no longer doubt of the result, and from this moment you can rely upon me. You shall be commander-in-chief of the army in Italy. I will myself propose you to the Directory, and I will so warmly speak in your favor, that my request will be granted." *

On this day the face of General Bonaparte was irradiated with a still deeper lustre than when Josephine avowed that his love was returned, and when she consented to be his.

Josephine's affianced, in the depths of his heart, retained a deep, unfulfilled desire, an unreached aim of his existence. The commanding general of the army in Italy had nothing more to wish, or to long for; he now stood at hope's summit, and saw before him the brilliant, glorious goal of ambition toward which the path lay open before him.

Love alone could not satisfy the heart of Napoleon; the larger portion of it belonged to ambition—to the lust for a warrior's fame.

"I am going to live only for the future," said Bonaparte, that day, to Junot, as he related to him the successful result of his interview with Carnot. "None of you know me yet, but you will soon. You will see what I can do: I feel within me something which urges me onward. Too long has the war been limited to a single district; I will take it into the heart of the continent, I will bring it on fresh soil,

* "Mémoires historiques et militaires, sur Carnot," vol. ii.

and so carry it out that the men of habit will lose their footing, and the old officers their heads, so that they will no more know where they are. The soldiers will see what one man, with a will of iron, can accomplish. All this I will do—and from this day I strike out from the dictionary the word 'impossible!'"

Carnot was true to his word. On the 23d day of February, 1796, Bonaparte was appointed by the Directory commander-in-chief of the army of Italy.

From the face of the young general beamed forth the smile of victory; he was now certain of the future! He now knew that to his Josephine he could offer more than a hat and a sword, that he would bring her undying fame and victory's brilliant crown. This was to be the dowry before which the twenty-five thousand francs' yearly income, which the little giant Ragideau had so highly prized, would fall into the background.

On the 9th of March the marriage between General Bonaparte and the widow Viscountess Josephine de Beauharnais took place. Barras, as member of the government, was Bonaparte's first witness; his second was Captain Lemarrois, his adjutant; and the choice of this witness was a delicate homage which Napoleon paid to his dear Josephine: for Lemarrois was the one who had first led the boy Eugene to Bonaparte, and had thus been the means of his acquaintance with Josephine.

The two witnesses of Josephine were Tallien, who had delivered her from prison, and to whom she owed the restoration of her property, and a M. Calmelet, an old friend and counsellor of the Beauharnais family.*

In the pure modesty of her heart, Josephine had not desired that the two children of her deceased husband should be the witnesses of her second marriage, and Bonaparte was

* "Souvenirs historiques du Baron de Meneval," vol. i., p. 340.

glad that Josephine's bridal wreath would not be bedewed with the tears of memory.

On this happy day of Bonaparte's marriage, so much of the past was set aside, that the certificate of baptism of the betrothed was forgotten, and the number of years which made Josephine older than Bonaparte was struck out.

The civil record, which M. Leclerc received of the marriage of Bonaparte and Josephine, describes them as being nearly of the same age, for it ran thus: "Napoleon Bonaparte, born in Ajaccio, on the 5th of February, 1768; and Marie Josephe Rosa Tascher de la Pagerie, born in Martinique, the 23d of June, 1767."

Bonaparte's glowing and impassioned love led him—in order to spare his Josephine the smallest degree of humiliation—to alter and destroy the dates of the certificate of their baptism; for Bonaparte was born on the 15th of August, 1769, and Josephine on the 23d of June, 1763. She was consequently six years older than he; but she knew not that these six years would, one day, be the abyss which was to swallow her happiness, her love, her grandeur.

Two days after his marriage with Josephine, Bonaparte left Paris for the army, to travel in haste, an uninterrupted journey toward Italy.

"I must hasten to my post," said he smiling to Josephine, "for an army without a chief is like a widow who can commit foolish deeds and endanger her reputation. I am responsible for the army's conduct from the moment of my appointment."

CHAPTER XXIV.

BONAPARTE'S LOVE-LETTERS.

CARNOT had told Bonaparte the truth concerning the state of the army in Italy. His statements were sustained by the proclamation which the new commander-in-chief of the army in Italy addressed to his soldiers, as for the first time he welcomed them at Nice.

"Soldiers," said he, "you are naked and badly fed; the government owes you much, and can give you nothing. Your patience and the courage you have exhibited amid these rocks are worthy of admiration; but you gain no fame: no glory falls upon you here. I will lead you into the fertile plains of the world; rich provinces and large cities will fall into your power; there you will find honor, fame, and abundance. Soldiers of Italy, would you fail in courage and perseverance?" *

The mangled, ragged, half-starved soldiers answered with loud enthusiastic shouts. When the *vivats* had died away, an old veteran came out of the ranks, and with countenance half-defiant, half-smiling, looking at the little general, he asked: "General, what must we do that the roasted partridges, which are promised to us, may fly into our mouths?"

"Conquer," cried Bonaparte, with a loud resounding voice—"conquer! To the brave, glory and good repasts! To the coward, disgrace! To the faint-hearted, misery! I will lead you into the path of victory. Will you follow?"

"We will, we will!" shouted the soldiers. "Long live the little general who is to deliver us from our wretchedness, who is to lead us into victory's path!"

* Norvins, "Histoire de Napoléon," vol. i., p. 89.

Bonaparte kept his word. He led them to Voltri, to the bridge of Arcola, to Lodi.

But amid his wild career of fights, hardships, vigils, studies, and perils, the thought of Josephine was the guiding star of his heart. His mind was with her amid the battle's storm; he thought of her in the camp, on the march, in the greatest conflict, and after the most brilliant victories. This was shown in the letters he wrote every day to Josephine; and in the brilliant hymns which the warrior, amid the carnage of war, sung with the enthusiastic fervor of a poet to his love and to his happiness.

It is the mission of eminent historians, when describing his victorious campaign of Italy, to narrate his conquests; our mission is simply to observe him in his conduct toward Josephine, and to show how under the uniform of the warrior beat the heart of the lover.

The letters which Bonaparte then wrote to Josephine are consequently what concerns us most, and from which we will select a few as a proof of the impassioned love which Napoleon felt for his young wife.

Letters of General Bonaparte to Josephine.

I.

"Port Maurice, *the 14th Germinal* (*April 3*), *1796.*

"I have received all your letters, but none has made so much impression on me as the last one. How can you, my adored friend, speak to me in that way? Do you not believe that my situation here is already horrible enough, without your exciting my longings, and still more setting my soul in rebellion? What a style! what emotions you describe! They glow like fire, they burn my poor heart! My own Josephine, away from you, there is no joy; away from you, the world is a wilderness in which I feel alone, and have no one in whom I can confide. You have taken

from me more than my soul; you are the only thought of my life. When I feel weary with the burden of affairs, when I dread some inauspicious result, when men oppose me, when I am ready to curse life itself, I place my hand upon my heart, your image beats there; I gaze on it, and love is for me absolute bliss, and everything smiles except when I am away from my beloved.

"By what art have you been able to enchain all my powers, and to concentrate in yourself all my mental existence? It is an enchantment, my dear friend, which is to end only with my life. To live for Josephine, such is the history of my life! I am working to return to you, I am dying to approach you! Fool that I am, I see not that I am more and more drifting away from you! How much space, how many mountains separate us! how long before you can read these words, the feeble expression of a throbbing soul in which you rule! Ah, my adored wife, I know not what future awaits me, but if it keeps me much longer away from you, it will be intolerable; my courage reaches not that far. There was a time when I was proud of my reputation; and sometimes when I cast my eyes on the wrong which men could have done me, on the fate which Providence might have in reserve for me, I prepared myself for the most unheard-of adversities without wrinkling the brow or suffering fear; but now the thought that my Josephine should be uncomfortable, or sick, or, above all, the cruel, horrible thought that she might love me less, makes my soul tremble, and my blood to remain still, bringing on sadness, despondency, and taking away even the courage of anger and despair. In times past I used to say, 'Men have no power over him who dies without regret.' But now to die without being loved by you, to die without the certainty of being loved, is for me the pains of hell, the living, fearful feeling of complete annihilation. It is as if I were going to suffocate! My own companion, you whom fate has given

me, to make life's painful journey, the day when no more I can call your heart mine, when nature will be for me without warmth, without vitality. . . . I will give way, my sweet friend (*ma douce amie*); my soul is sorrowful, my body languishes; men weary me. I have a good right to detest them, for they keep me away from my heart.

"I am now in Port Maurice, near to Oneglia; to-morrow I go to Albenga. Both armies are moving forward; we are endeavoring to deceive each other. Victory belongs to the swiftest. I am well satisfied with General Beaulieu, he manœuvres well; he is a stronger man than his predecessor. I trust to beat him soundly. Be without care; love me as your eyes; but no, that is not enough, as yourself, more than yourself, as your thoughts, as your spirit, your life, your all! Sweet friend, pardon me; I am beyond myself; nature is too weak for him who feels with passion, for him whom you love.

"To Barras, Sucy, Madame Tallien, my heart-felt friendship; to Madame Chateau Renaud, kindest regards; for Eugene and Hortense, my true love. N. B."

II.

"Albenga, *the 18th Germinal (April 7), 1796.**

"I have just now received your letter, which you break off, as you say, to go to the country; and then, you assume a tone as if you were envious of me, who am here nearly

* The three following letters have never been published until recently, and are not to be found in any collection of letters from Napoleon and Josephine, not even among those published by Queen Hortense: "Lettres de Napoléon à Josephine, et de Josephine à Napoléon." They are published for the first time in the "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," by Aubenas, and were communicated to this author in Napoleon's manuscript by the well-known and famous gatherer of autographs, Feuillet de Couches.

overwhelmed by affairs and by exertion! Ah, my dear friend, ... it is true, I am wrong. In the spring it is so pleasant in the country; and then the beloved one of eighteen years will be so happy there; how would it be possible to lose one moment for the sake of writing to him who is three hundred miles away from you, who lives, breathes, exists only in remembering you, who reads your letters as a man, after hunting for six hours, devours a meal he is fond of.

"I am satisfied. Your last letter is cold, like friendship. I have not found in it the fire which glows in your eyes, the fire which I have at least imagined to be there. So far runs my fancy. I found that your first letters oppressed my soul too much; the revolution which they created in me disturbed my peace and bewildered my senses. I wanted letters more cold, and now they bring on me the chill of death. The fear of being no more loved by Josephine—the thought of having her inconstant—of seeing her . . . . But I martyrize myself with anguish! There is enough in the reality, without imagining any more! You cannot have inspired me with this immeasurable love without sharing it; and with such a soul, such thoughts, such an understanding as you possess, it is impossible that, as a reward for the most glowing attachment and devotion, you should return a mortal blow. . . .

"You say nothing of your bodily sufferings; they have my regret. Farewell till to-morrow, *mio dolce amor*. From my own wife a thought—and from fate a victory; these are all my wishes: one sole, undivided thought from you, worthy of him who every moment thinks of you.

"My brother is here. He has heard of my marriage with pleasure. He longs to become acquainted with you. I am endeavoring to persuade him to go to Paris. His wife has recently given birth to a daughter. They send you a box of *bonbons* from Genoa as a present. You will receive

oranges, perfumes, and water of orange-flowers, which I send you. Junot and Murat send their best wishes.

"N. B."

The victory which Bonaparte implored from his destiny was soon to take place; and the battle of Mondovi, which followed the capitulation of Cherasco, made Bonaparte master of Piedmont and of the passes of the Alps. He sent his brother Joseph to Paris, to lay before the Directory pressing considerations concerning the necessity and importance of concluding a permanent peace with the King of Sardinia, so as to isolate Austria entirely in Italy. At the same time Junot was to take to the Directory the conquered standards. Joseph and Junot travelled together from Nice by means of post-horses, and they made so rapid a journey that in one hundred and twenty hours they reached Paris.

The victor's messengers and the conquered flags were received in Paris with shouts of rapture, and with a glowing enthusiasm for General Bonaparte. His name was on every tongue. In the streets and on the squares crowds gathered together to talk of the glorious news, and to shout their acclamations to the brave army and its general. Even the Directory, the five monarchs of France, shared the universal joy and enthusiasm. They received Joseph and Junot with affable complacency, and communicated to the army and to its general public eulogies. In honor of the messengers who had brought the standards and the propositions of peace, they gave a brilliant banquet; and Carnot, proud of having been the one who had brought about Bonaparte's appointment, went so far in his enthusiasm as at the close of the banquet to tear his garments open and exhibit to the assembled guests Napoleon's portrait which he carried on his breast.

"Tell your brother," cried he to Joseph, "that I carry him here on my heart, for I foresee he will be the deliverer

of France, and therefore he must know that in the Directory he has only admirers and friends." *

But something else, more glorious than these salutations of love from France and from the Directory, was to be brought back by his messengers to the victorious commander—his wife, his Josephine; he claimed her as the reward of battles won. Joseph was not only the messenger of the general, he was also the messenger of the lover; and before delivering his papers to the Directory, he had first, as Bonaparte had ordered him, to deliver to Josephine his letter which called her to Milan. Napoleon had thus written to her:

III.

"TO MY SWEET FRIEND!

"CARN, *the 3rd Floreal (May 24), 1796.*

"My brother will hand you this letter. I cherish for him the most intimate friendship. I trust he will also gain your affection. He deserves it. Nature has gifted him with a tender and inexhaustibly good character; he is full of rare qualities. I write to Barras to have him appointed consul to some Italian port. He desires to live with his little wife away from the world's great stream of events. I recommend him to you.

"I have received your letters of the 16th and of the 21st. You have indeed for many days forgotten to write. What, then, are you doing? Yes, my dear friend, I am not exactly jealous, but I am sometimes uneasy. Hasten, then, for I tell you beforehand that if you delay I shall be sick. So great exertion, combined with your absence, is too much.

"Your letters are the joys of my days, and my happy days are not too many. Junot takes to Paris twenty-two standards. You will come back with him, will you not?

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 62.

. . . . Misery without remedy, sorrow without comfort, unmitigated anguish, will be my portion if it is my misfortune to see him come back alone, my own adored wife! He will see you, he will breathe at your shrine, and perhaps you will even grant him the special and unsurpassed privilege of kissing your cheeks, and I, I will be far, far away! You will come here, at my side, to my heart, in my arms! Take wings, come, come! Yet, journey slowly; the road is long, bad, fatiguing! If your carriage were to upset, if some calamity were to happen, if the exertion . . . . Set out at once, my beloved one, but travel slowly!

"I have received a letter from Hortense, a very acceptable one indeed. I am going to answer it. I love her much, and will soon send her the perfumes she desires. N. B."

But Josephine could not meet at once the ardent wishes of her husband. She had, on the receipt of his letter, made with Joseph all the necessary preparations for the journey; but the ailment which had so long troubled her, broke out, and a violent illness prostrated her.

Bonaparte's suffering and anger at this news were unbounded; a terrible restlessness and anxiety took possession of him, and, to obtain speedy and reliable news from Josephine, he sent from Milan to Paris a special courier, whose only business it was to carry a letter to Josephine.

The general had nothing to communicate to the Directory; it was only the lover writing to his beloved! What fire, what energy of passion, penetrated him, is evident from the following letter:

IV.

"Tortona, *at noon, the 27th Prairial,*
"*In the Year IV. of the Republic (15th June, 1796).*

"To Josephine: My life is a ceaseless Alpine burden. An oppressive foreboding prevents me from breathing. I

live no more, I have lost more than life, more than happiness, more than rest! I am without hope. I send you a courier. He will remain only four hours in Paris, and return with your answer. Write me only ten lines; they will be some comfort to me. . . . You are sick, you love me, I have troubled you; you are pregnant, and I cannot see you. This thought bewilders me. I have done you so much wrong, that I know not how to make amends for it. I found fault because you remained in Paris, and you were sick! Forgive me, my beloved. The passion you have inspired in me has taken my reason away; I cannot find it again. One is never cured of this evil. My contemplations are so horrible, that it would be a satisfaction to see you; to press you for two hours to my heart, and then, to die together! Who takes care of you? I imagine that you have sent for Hortense. I love this child a thousand times more, when I think she can comfort you somewhat. As regards myself, there will be no solace, no rest, no hope, before the courier whom I have sent to you has returned, and you have told me in a long letter the cause of your illness, and how serious it is. I tell you beforehand that if it is dangerous I will at once go to Paris. My presence would be called for by your sickness. I have always been fortunate. Never has Fate stood against my wishes, and to-day it strikes me where only wounds are possible. Josephine, how can you delay so long in writing to me? Your last laconic note is dated the 3d of this month, and this adds to my sorrow. Yet I have it always in my pocket. Your portrait and your letters are always under my eyes.

"I am nothing without you. I can scarcely understand how I have lived without knowing you. Ah, Josephine, if you know my heart, could you remain without writing from the 29th of May to the 16th of June, and not travel hither? Have you lent an ear to faithless friends, who wish to keep you away from me? I am angry with the whole world; I

accuse every one round about you. I had calculated that you would leave on the 5th, and be at Milan on the 15th.

"Josephine, if you love me, if you believe that all depends on the recovery of your health, take good care of yourself. I dare not tell you not to undertake so long a journey—not to travel in the heat, if you possibly can move. Make small journeys; write to me at every stopping-place, and send me each time your letters by a courier. . . . Your sickness troubles me by night and by day. Without appetite or sleep, without regard for friendship, reputation, or country!—you and you alone! The rest of the world exists no more for me than if it were sunk into oblivion. I still cling to honor, for you hold to it; to fame, for it is a joy to you; if it were not for this, I would have abandoned every thing to hasten to your feet.

"Sometimes, I say to myself: 'I trouble myself without cause, she is already well, she has left Paris and is on the way, she is perhaps in Lyons.'. . . Fruitless deception! You are in your bed, suffering—more interesting—more worthy of adoration; you are pale, and your eyes are more languishing than ever! when you are well again, if one of us is to be sick, cannot I be the one? for I am stronger, I have more vital power, and would therefore sooner conquer sickness. Fate is cruel, it strikes me through you.

"What sometimes comforts me is to know that on fate depends your sickness, but that it depends on no one to oblige me to outlive you.

"Be careful, my dearly-beloved one, to tell me in your letter that you are convinced that I love you above all that can be conceived; that never has it come to me to think of other women; that they are all in my eyes without grace, beauty, or wit; that you, you entirely, you as I see you, as you are, can please me and fetter all the powers of my soul; that you have grasped it in all its immeasurableness; that my heart has no folds closed from your eyes, no thoughts

which belong not to you; that my energies, arms, mind, every thing in me, is subject to you; that my spirit lives in your body; that the day when you will be inconstant or when you will cease to live, will be the day of my death, and that nature and earth are beautiful to my eyes only because you live in them. If you do not believe all this, if your soul is not convinced of it, penetrated with it, then I am deceived in you, then you love me no more. A magnetic fluid runs between persons who love one another. You know that I could never see, much less could I endure, a lover: to see him and to tear his heart would be one and the same thing; and then I might even lay hands on your sacred person . . . . no, I would never dare do it, but I would fly from a world where those I deem the most virtuous have deceived me.

"But I am certain of your love, and proud of it. Accidents are probations which keep alive all the energies of our mutual affections. My adored one, you will give birth to a child resembling his mother; it will pass many years in your arms. Unfortunate that I am, I would be satisfied with one day! A thousand kisses on your eyes and lips! . . . . adored wife, how mighty is your spell! I am ill on account of your illness. I have a burning fever. Retain the courier no longer than six hours; then let him return, that he may bring me a letter from my sovereign. N. B."

These were the first letters which Josephine received from her loving, tender husband. They are a splendid monument of affection with which love adorns the solitary grave of the departed empress; and surely in the dark hours of her life, the remembrance of these days of happiness, of these letters so full of passionate ardor, must have alleviated the bitterness of her grief and given her the consolation that at least she was once loved as perhaps no other woman on earth can boast! All these letters of Bonaparte,

during the days of his first prosperity, and of his earnest cravings, Josephine had carefully gathered; they were to be, amid the precious and costly treasures which the future was to lay at her feet, the most glorious and most prized, and which she preserved with sacred loyalty as long as she lived.

This is the reason that, out of all the letters which Bonaparte wrote to Josephine during long years, not one is lost; that there is no gap in the correspondence, and that we can with complete certainty, from week to week and year to year, follow the relations which existed between them, and that the thermometer can be placed on Bonaparte's heart to observe how by degrees the heat diminishes, the warmth of passion disappears into the cool temperature of a quiet friendship, and how it never sinks to cold indifference, even when Josephine had to yield to the young and proud daughter of Austria, and give up her place at the side of the emperor.

Of all the letters of Josephine to Bonaparte, which were now so glowing that they seemed to devour him with flames of fire and bewildered his senses, and then so cold and indifferent that they caused the chill of death to pass over his frame—of all these, not one has been preserved to posterity. Perhaps the Emperor Napoleon destroyed them; when in the Tuileries he received Josephine's successor, his second wife, and when he endeavored to destroy in his own proud heart the memory of the beautiful, happy past, he there destroyed those letters, that they might return to dust, even as his own love had returned.

CHAPTER XXV.

JOSEPHINE IN ITALY.

BONAPARTE'S letter, which the courier brought to Josephine, found her recovered, and ready to follow her husband's call, and go to Milan. But she was deprived of one precious and joyous hope: the child, which Bonaparte so much envied because it would pass many years in Josephine's arms, was never to be born.

In the last days of the month of June Josephine arrived in Milan. Her whole journey had been one uninterrupted triumph. In Turin, at the court of the King of Sardinia, she had received the homage of the people as if she were the wife of a mighty ruler; and wherever she went, she was received with honors and distinction. To Turin Bonaparte had sent before him one of his adjutants, General Marmont, afterward Duke de Ragusa, to convey to her his kindest regards and to accompany her with a military escort as far as Milan. In the palace de Serbelloni, his residence in Milan, adorned as for a feast, Bonaparte received her with a countenance radiant with joy and happy smiles such as seldom brightened his pale, gloomy features.

But Bonaparte had neither much time nor leisure to devote to his domestic happiness, to his long-expected reunion with Josephine. Only three days could the happy lover obtain from the restless commander; then he had to tear himself away from his sweet repose, to carry on further the deadly strife which he had begun in Italy against Austria—which had decided not to give away one foot of Lombardy without a struggle—and not to submit to the conqueror of Lodi. A new army was marched into Italy under the command of General Wurmser, the same against whom, three years before, on the shores of the Rhine, Alexandre de Beauharnais had fought in vain. At the head of sixty

thousand men Wurmser moved into Italy to relieve Mantua, besieged by the French.

This alarming news awoke Bonaparte out of his dream of love, and neither Josephine's tears nor prayers could keep him back. He sent couriers to Paris, to implore from the Directory fresh troops and more money, to continue the campaign. The Directory answered him with the proposition to divide the army of Italy into two columns, one of which would act under the commander-in-chief, General Kellermann, the other under Bonaparte.

But this proposition, which the jealous Directory made for the sake of breaking the growing power of Bonaparte, only served to lift him a step higher in his path to the brilliant career which he alone, in the depths of his heart, had traced, and the secret of which his closed lips would reveal to no one.

Bonaparte's answer to this proposition of the Directory was, that if the power were to be divided, he could only refuse the half of this division, and would retire entirely from command.

He wrote to Carnot: "It is a matter of indifference to me whether I carry on the war here or elsewhere. To serve my country, and deserve from posterity one page of history, is all my ambition! If both I and Kellermann command in Italy, then all is lost. General Kellermann has more experience than I, and will carry on the war more ably. But the matter can only be badly managed if we both command. It is no pleasure for me to serve with a man whom Europe considers the first general of the age."

Carnot showed this letter to the Directory, and declared that if Bonaparte were to be given up, he would himself resign his position of secretary of war. The Directory was not prepared to accept this twofold responsibility, and they sacrificed Kellermann to the threats of Napoleon and Carnot.

General Bonaparte was confirmed in his position of com-

mander-in-chief of the army in Italy, even for the future, and the conduct of the war was left in his hands alone.

With this fresh triumph over his enemies at home, Bonaparte marched from Milan to fight the re-enforced enemy of France in Italy.

On this new war-path, amid dangers and conflicts, the tumults of the fight, the noise of the camp, the confusion of the bivouac, the young general did not for one moment forget the wife he so passionately loved. Nearly every day he wrote to her, and those letters, which were often written between the dictation of the battle's plan, the dispatches to the Directory, and the impending conflict, are faithful waymarks, whose directions it is easy to follow, and thus trace the whole successful course of the hero of Italy.

To refer here to Bonaparte's letters to Josephine, implies at once the mention of Bonaparte's deeds and of Josephine's happiness. The first letter which he wrote after the interview in Milan is from Roverbella, and it tells her in a few words that he has just now beaten the foe, and that he is going to Verona. The second is also short and hastily written, but is full of many delicate assurances of love, and also that he has met and defeated the foe at Verona. The third letter is from Marmirolo, and shows that Bonaparte, notwithstanding his constant changes of position, had taken the precautions that Josephine's letters should everywhere follow him; for in Marmirolo he received one, and this tender letter filled him with so much joy, thanks, and longings, that, in virtue of it, he forgets conquests and triumphs entirely, and is only the longing, tender lover. He writes:

"MARMIROLO, *the 29th Messidor, 9 in the evening*
"*(July 17), 1796.*

"I am just now in receipt of your letter, my adored one; it has filled my heart with joy. I am thankful for the pains you have taken to send me news about yourself; with your

improved health, all will be well; I am convinced that you have now recovered. I would impress upon you the duty of riding often; this will be a healthy exercise for you.

"Since I left you I am forever sorrowful. My happiness consists in being near you. Constantly does my memory renew your kisses, your tears, your amiable jealousy; and the charms of the incomparable Josephine kindle incessantly a burning flame within my heart and throughout my senses. When shall I, free from all disturbance and care, pass all my moments with you, and have nothing to do but to love, nothing to think of but the happiness to tell it and prove it to you? I am going to send you your horse, and I trust you will soon be able to be with me. A few days ago I thought I loved you, but since I have seen you again, I feel that I love you a thousand times more. Since I knew you, I worship you more and more every day; this proves the falsity of La Bruyère's maxim, which says that love springs up all at once. Every thing in nature has its growth in different degrees. Ah, I implore you, let me see some of your faults; be then less beautiful, less graceful, less tender, less good; especially be never tender, never weep: your tears deprive me of my reason, and change my blood into fire. Believe me, that it is not in my power to have a single thought which concerns you not, or an idea which is not subservient to you.

"Keep very quiet. Recover soon your health. Come to me, that at least before dying we may say, 'We were happy so many, many days!'

"Millions of kisses even for Fortuné, notwithstanding its naughtiness.* BONAPARTE."

But this letter, full of tenderness and warmth, is not yet enough for the ardent lover; it does not express sufficiently

* Fortuné was that little peevish dog which, when Josephine was in prison, served as love-messenger between her and her children.

his longing, his love. The very next day, from the same quarters of Marmirolo, he writes something like a postscript to the missive of the previous day. He tells her that he has made an attack upon Mantua, but that a sudden fall of the waters of the lake had delayed his troops already embarked, and that this day he is going to try again in some other way; that the enemy a few days past had made a sortie and killed a few hundred men, but that they themselves, with considerable loss, had to retreat rapidly into the fortress, and that three Neapolitan regiments had entered Brescia. But between each of these sentences intervene some strong assurance of his love, some tender or flattering words; and finally, at the end of the letter, comes the principal object, the cause why it was written. The tender lover wanted some token from his beloved: it is not enough for him always to carry her portrait and her letters, he must also have a lock of her hair. He writes:

"I have lost my snuffbox; I pray you find me another, somewhat more flat, and pray have something pretty written upon it, with a lock of your hair. A thousand burning kisses, since you are so cold, love unbounded, and faithfulness beyond all proof."

Two days afterward he writes again from Marmirolo, at first hastily, a few words about the war, then he comes to the main point. He has been guilty, toward Josephine, of a want of politeness, and, with all the tenderness and humility of a lover, he asks forgiveness. Her pardon and her constant tardiness in answering his letters, are to him more weighty matters than all the battles and victories of his restless camp-life, and therefore he begins at once with a complaint at his separation from her.

"MARMIROLO, *the 1st Thermidor, Year IV. (July 19, 1796.)*

"For the last two days I am without letters from you. This remark I have repeated thirty times; you feel that

this for me is sad. You cannot, however, doubt of the tenderness and undivided solicitude with which you inspire me.

"We attacked Mantua yesterday. We opened upon it, from two batteries, a fire of shells and red-hot balls. The whole night the unfortunate city was burning. The spectacle was terrible and sublime. We have taken possession of numerous outworks, and we open the trenches to-night. To-morrow we make our headquarters at Castiglione, and think of passing the night there.

"I have received a courier from Paris. He brought two letters for you: I have read them. Though this action seems to me very simple, as you gave me permission so to do, yet, I fear, it will annoy you, and that troubles me exceedingly. I wanted at first to seal them over again; but, pshaw! that would have been horrible. If I am guilty, I beg your pardon. I swear to you I did it not through jealousy; no, certainly not; I have of my adored one too high an opinion to indulge in such a feeling. I wish you would once for all allow me to read your letters; then I should not have any twittings of conscience or fear.

"Achilles, the courier, has arrived from Milan; no letter from my adored one! Farewell, my sole happiness! When will you come, and be with me? I shall have to fetch you from Milan myself.

"A thousand kisses, burning as my heart, pure as yours!

"I have sent for the courier; he says he was at your residence, and that you had nothing to say, nothing to order! Fie! wicked, hateful, cruel tyrant!—pretty little monster! You laugh at my threats and my madness; ah, you know very well that if I could shut you up in my heart, I would keep you there a prisoner.

"Let me know that you are cheerful, right well, and loving! BONAPARTE."

But Josephine seems not to have answered this letter as Napoleon desired. She knew that it was nothing but unfounded jealousy which had induced him to read the letters sent to her, and to punish him for this jealousy she forbade him to read her letters in the future.

But while she reproached him in a jesting manner, and punished him for this jealousy, she, herself, with all the inconsistency of a lover, fell into the same fault, and could not hide from him the jealous fears which the ladies from Brescia, especially the beautiful Madame de Te——, had created within her mind. Bonaparte answered this letter as general, lover, and husband; he gives an account of his war operations, submits to her will as a lover, and commands her as a husband to come to him in Brescia.

"CASTIGLIONE, *the 4th Thermidor, Year IV. (July 22, 1796).*

"The wants of the army require my presence in these parts; it is impossible for me to go so far away as Milan; it would require for that purpose five or six days, and during that time circumstances might arise which would make my presence here absolutely necessary.

"You assure me that your health is now good; consequently, I pray you to come to Brescia. At this moment I am sending Murat into the city to prepare you such a house as you wish.

"I believe that you can very well sleep in Cassano on the 6th, if you leave Milan late, so as to be in Brescia on the 7th, where the most tender of lovers awaits you. I am in despair that you can believe, my dear friend, that my heart can be drawn toward any one but yourself; it belongs to you by right of conquest, and will be enduring and everlasting. I do not understand why you speak of Madame de Te——. I trouble myself no more about her than any other woman in Brescia. Since it annoys you that I open your letters, the enclosed one will be the last that I

open; your letter did not reach me till after I had opened this.

"Farewell, my tender one; send me often your news. Break up at once and come to me, and be happy without disquietude; all is well, and my heart belongs to you for life.

"Be sure to return to the Adjutant Miollis the box of medallions which, as he writes, he has given you. There are so many babbling and bad tongues, that it is necessary to be always on one's guard.

"Health, love, and speedy arrival in Brescia!

"I have in Milan a carriage which is suited for city and country; use it on your journey. Bring your silver and a few necessary things. Travel by short stages, and during the cool of the morning and evening, so as not to weary you too much. The troops need only three days to reach Brescia, a distance of fourteen miles. I beg of you to pass the night of the 6th in Cassano; on the 7th I will come to meet you as far as possible.

"Farewell, my Josephine; a thousand tender kisses!

"BONAPARTE."

Josephine gladly obeyed the wishes of her husband, and exactly on the 7th Thermidor (July 25) she entered Brescia. Bonaparte had ridden an hour's distance to meet her, and, amid the shouts of the population, he led her in triumph into the house prepared for her reception.

Three days were allowed to the general to enjoy his happiness and Josephine's presence. On the 28th of July he received the intelligence that Wurmser was advancing, and that he was in Marmirolo. At once Bonaparte broke up from Brescia, to meet him and offer battle.

Brescia was no longer a dwelling-place for Josephine now that the enemy threatened it; she therefore accompanied her husband, and the effeminate creole, the tender

Parisian, accustomed to all the comforts of life, the lady surrounded by numerous attendants in Milan, saw herself at once obliged, as the true wife of a soldier, to share with her husband all the hardships, inconveniences, and dangers of a campaign.

The news of the advance of the Austrians became more and more precise. No sooner had Bonaparte arrived in Peschiera with his Josephine, than he learned that Montevaldo was attacked by the enemy. In great haste they pursued their journey; the next day they reached Verona, but Wurmser had been equally swift in his movements, and on the heights surrounding Verona were seen the light troops of Austria.

Even a serious skirmish at the outposts took place, and Josephine, against her will, had to be the witness of this horrible, cannibal murder, which we are pleased to call war.

Bonaparte, who had preceded his army, was forced to retreat from Verona, and went with Josephine to Castel Nuovo, where the majority of his troops were stationed. But it was a fearful journey, beset with dangers. Everywhere on the road lay the dying and the wounded who had remained behind after the different conflicts, and who with difficulty were crawling along to meet the army. Josephine's sensitive heart was painfully moved by the spectacle of these sufferings and these bleeding wounds. Napoleon noticed it on her pale cheeks and trembling lips, and in the tears which stood in her eyes. Besides which, a great battle was at hand, threatening her with new horrors. To guard her from them, Bonaparte made another sacrifice to his love, and resolved to part from her.

She was to return to Brescia, while Napoleon, with his army, would meet the foe. With a thousand assurances of love, and the most tender vows, he took leave of Josephine, and she mastered herself so as to repress her anxiety and timidity, and to appear collected and brave. With a smile

on her lip she bade him farewell, and began the journey, accompanied by a few well-armed horsemen, whom Bonaparte, in the most stringent terms, commanded not to leave his wife's carriage for an instant, and in case of attack to defend her with their lives.

At first the journey was attended with no danger, and Josephine's heart began to beat with less anxiety; she already believed herself in safety. Suddenly, from a neighboring coppice, there rushed out a division of the enemy's cavalry; already were distinctly heard the shouts and cries with which they dashed toward the advancing carriage. To oppose this vast number of assailants was not to be thought of; only the most rapid flight could save them.

The carriage was turned; the driver jumped upon the horses, and, in a mad gallop, onward it sped. To the swiftness of the horses Josephine owed her escape. She reached headquarters safely, and was received by Bonaparte with loud demonstrations of joy at her unexpected return.

But Josephine had not the strength to conceal the anxiety of her heart, her fears and alarms. These horrible scenes of war, the sight of the wounded, the dangers she had lately incurred, the fearful preparations for fresh murders and massacres—all this troubled her mind so violently that she lost at once all courage and composure. A nervous trembling agitated her whole frame, and, not being able to control her agony, she broke into loud weeping.

Bonaparte embraced her tenderly, and as he kissed the tears from her cheeks, he cried out, with a threatening flash in his eyes, "Wurmser will pay dearly for the tears he has caused!" *

It was, however, a fortunate accident that the enemy's cavalry had hindered Josephine from reaching Brescia. A quarter of an hour after her return to headquarters the

* Bonaparte's words.—"Mémorial de Ste. Helène," vol. i., p. 174.

news arrived that the Austrians had advanced into Brescia. Meanwhile Josephine had already regained all her courage and steadfastness; she declared herself ready to abide by her husband, to bear with him the dangers and the fatigues of the campaign; that she wished to be with him, as it behooved the wife of a soldier.

But Bonaparte felt that her company would cripple his courage and embarrass his movements. Josephine once more had to leave him, so that the tender lover might not disturb the keen commanding general, and that his head and not his heart might decide the necessary measures.

He persuaded Josephine to leave him, and to retire into one of the central cities of Italy. She acceded to his wishes, and travelled away toward Florence. But, to reach that city, it was necessary to pass Mantua, which the French were investing. Her road passed near the walls of the besieged city, and one of the balls, which were whizzing around the carriage, struck one of the soldiers of her escort and wounded him mortally. It was a dangerous, fearful journey—war's confusion everywhere, wild shouts, fleeing, complaining farmers, constant cries of distress, anxiety, and want.

But Josephine had armed her heart with great courage and resolution; she shrank from no danger, she overcame it all; she already had an undaunted confidence in her husband's destiny, and believed in the star of his prosperity.

And this star led her on happily through all dangers, and protected her throughout this reckless and daring journey. Through Bologna and Ferrara, she came at last to Lucca; there to rest a few days from her hardships and anxieties. There, in Lucca, she was to experience the proud satisfaction of being witness of the deep confidence which had struck root in the heart of the Italians, in reference to the success of the French commander-in-chief. Though it was well known that Wurmser, with a superior force, was advancing against General Bonaparte, and his hungry,

tattered troops, and that they were on the eve of a battle which, according to all appearances, promised to Napoleon a complete defeat, and to the Austrians a decisive victory, the town of Lucca was not afraid to give to the wife of Bonaparte a grand and public reception. The senate of Lucca received her with all the marks of distinction shown only to princesses; the senate came to her in official ceremony, and brought her as a gift of honor, in costly gold flasks, the produce of their land, the fine oil of Lucca.

Josephine received these marks of honor with that grace and amiability with which she won all hearts, and, with her enchanting smile, thanking the senators, she told them, with all the confidence of a lover, that her victorious husband would, for the magnificent hospitality thus shown her, manifest his gratitude to the town of Lucca by the prosperity and liberty which he was ready to conquer for Italy.

This confidence was shortly to be justified. No sooner had Josephine arrived in Florence, whither she had come from Lucca, than the news of the victory of the French army, commanded by her husband, reached there also.

Suddenly abandoning the siege of Mantua, Bonaparte had gathered together all his forces, and with them he dealt blow after blow upon the three divisions of the army corps of Wurmser, until he had completely defeated them. The battles of Lonato and Castiglione were the fresh trophies of his fame. On the 10th of August Bonaparte made his victorious entry into Brescia, which only twelve days before he had been suddenly obliged to abandon with his Josephine, to whom he had then been barely reunited, and was still luxuriating in the bliss of her presence.

Bonaparte had fulfilled his word: he had revenged Josephine, and Wurmser had indeed paid dearly for the tears which he had caused Josephine to shed!

But after these days of storm and danger, the two lovers

were to enjoy a few weeks of mutual happiness and of splendid triumphs.

Josephine had returned from Florence to Milan, and thither Bonaparte came also in the middle of August, to rest in her arms after his battles and victories.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BONAPARTE AND JOSEPHINE IN MILAN.

The days of armistice which Bonaparte passed in Milan were accompanied by festivities, enjoyments, and triumphs of all kinds. All Milan and Lombardy streamed forth to present their homage to the deliverer of Italy and to his charming, gracious wife; to give feasts in their honor, to praise them in enthusiastic songs, to celebrate their fame in concerts, serenades, and illuminations.

The palace Serbelloni served Italy's deliverer once more as a residence, and it was well calculated for this on account of its vastness and elegance. This was one of the most beautiful buildings among the palaces of Milan. Over its massive lower structure, and its *rez-de-chaussée* of red granite, sparkling in the sun with its play of many colors, arose bold and steep its light and graceful *façade*. The interior of this beautiful palace of the Dukes of Serbelloni was adorned with all the splendors which sculpture and painting gathered into the palaces of the Italian nobility.

In those halls, whose roofs were richly decorated and gilded, and supported by white columns of marble, and whose walls were covered with those splendid and enormous mirrors which the republic of Venice alone then manufactured; and from whose tall windows hung down in long, heavy folds curtains of purple velvet, embroidered with

gold, the work of the famous artisans of Milan—in those brilliant halls the happy couple, Bonaparte and Josephine, received the deputies of applauding Italy and the high aristocracy of all Lombardy.

An eye-witness thus describes a reception-evening in the Serbelloni palace: "The hall in which the general received his visitors was a long gallery divided by marble columns into three smaller rooms; the two extreme divisions formed two large drawing-rooms, perfectly square, and the middle partition formed a long and wide promenade apartment. In the drawing-room, into which I entered, was Madame Bonaparte, the beautiful Madame Visconti, Madame Leopold Berthier, and Madame Ivan. Under the arches, at the entrance of the middle room, stood the general; around him, but at a distance, the chiefs of the war department, the magistrates of the city, with a few ministers of the Italian governments, all in respectful attitude before him. Nothing seemed to be more striking than the bearing of this little man among the dignitaries overawed by his character. His attitude had nothing of pride, but it had the dignity of a man conscious of his worth, and who feels that he is in the right place. Bonaparte tried not to increase his stature, so as to be on the same level with those around him; they already spared him that trouble, and bowed to him. None of those who conversed with him appeared taller than he. Berthier, Silmaine, Clarke, Augereau, awaited silently till he should address them, an honor which this evening was not conferred upon all. Never were headquarters so much like a court: they were the prelude to the Tuileries." *

To Milan came the ambassadors of princes, of the free cities, and of the Italian republics. They all claimed Bonaparte's assistance and protection; they came bearers of good-will, of utterances of hope and fear, and expecting

* Arnold, "Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire," vol. iii., p. 10.

from him help and succor. The princes trembled for their thrones; the cities and republics for their independence; they wanted to conciliate by their submission the general whose sword could either threaten them all or give them ample protection. Bonaparte received this homage with the composure of a protector, and sometimes also with the proud reserve of a conqueror.

He granted to the Duke of Parma the protection which he had sought, and permitted him to remain on his territory as prince and ruler, though the strongest expostulations had been made to Bonaparte on that point.

"He is a Bourbon," they said; "he must no longer rule."

"He is an unfortunate man," replied Bonaparte, proudly; "it is not worth while to attack him. If we leave him on his lands, he will rule only in our name; if we drive him away, he will be weaving intrigues everywhere. Let him remain where he is, I wish him no wrong; his presence can be useful, his absence would surely be hurtful."

"But he is a Bourbon, citizen general, a Bourbon!" exclaimed Augereau, with animation.

Bonaparte's countenance darkened, and his brow was overspread with frowns. "Well, then," cried he, with threatening tone, "he is a Bourbon! Is he therefore by nature of so despicable a family? Because three Bourbons have been killed in France, must we therefore hunt down all the others? I cannot approve of proscriptions which thus fall upon a whole family, a whole class of people. An absurd law has prohibited all the nobles from serving the republic, and yet Barras is in the Directory, and I am at the head of the army in Italy. We are consequently liable to punishment in virtue of your absurd and cruel system! Hunt down those who do wrong, but not masses who are innocent. Can you punish Paris and France for the crimes of the *sans-culottes?* The Bourbons are, it is said, the ene-

mies of freedom; they have been led to the scaffold under the action of a right which I do not acknowledge. The Duke of Parma is weak, and a poltroon,—he will not stir. His people seem to love him, for we are here, and they rise not, they utter no complaint. Let him, then, continue to rule as long as he pays all that I exact from him." *

Thanks to the good-will and protection of the republican general, the Duke of Parma remained on his little throne—on the same throne which was one day to be to Napoleon's second wife a compensation for her lost imperial crown. The Empress of France was to become a Duchess of Parma; and now to her husband, the present general of the republic, the actual Duke of Parma was indebted that his little dukedom was not converted into a republic.

It is true that the duke had to pay dearly for the protection which Bonaparte granted. He had to pay a war-subsidy of two million francs, and, besides, give from his collection his most beautiful painting, that of St. Jerome by Correggio, for the Museum of the Louvre in Paris.† The duke, as a lover of art, was more distressed at the loss of this picture than at the enormous contribution he had to pay; for he soon caused the proposition to be made to General Bonaparte, to redeem from the French government that painting, for the sum of two hundred thousand francs, a proposition which Bonaparte, without any further consultation with the authorities in Paris, rejected with some degree of irritation.

The Duke of Parma remained therefore the sovereign of his duchy, because it so pleased Bonaparte; but Bonaparte was led into error when he thought that, as his people rebelled not, they therefore loved their duke, and were satisfied with him. The women and the priests controlled

* Napoleon's words.—See Hazlitt, "Histoire de Napoléon," vol. v., p. 1.

† This splendid picture is now in the Vatican at Rome.

entirely the feeble duke; and not only the people, but the better classes and the aristocracy, submitted to all this with great unwillingness. Once, when Joseph Bonaparte, whom the French republic had sent to give assurance of protection and recognition to the little Duke of Parma, was walking with a few cavaliers in the gardens around the duke's palace in Colorno, he expressed his admiration at the symmetry and beauty of the buildings.

"That is true," was the answer, "but just look at the buildings of the neighboring cloister! do you not see how superior that dwelling is to that of the sovereign? Wretched is the country where this can take place!" *

Even the representatives of the republic of Venice came to Bonaparte. They came not only to secure his friendship, but also to complain that the French army, in its advance upon Brescia, had done injury to the neutral territory of Venice.

Bonaparte directed at them a look of imperious severity, and, instead of laying stress on their neutrality, he asked in a sharp tone, "Are you for us, or against us?"

"Signor, we are neutral, and—"

"Do not be neutral," interrupted Bonaparte, with vehemence, "be strong, otherwise your friendship is useful to none."

And, with imperious tone, he reproached them for the vacillating, perfidious conduct which, since 1792, had been the policy of Venice, and he threatened to punish and destroy that republic if she did not immediately prove herself to be the loyal friend of the French.

While Bonaparte used the few short weeks of rest to bring Italy more and more under the yoke of France, it was Josephine's privilege to draw to herself and toward her husband the minds of the Italians, to win their hearts to her

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 65.

husband, and through him to the French republic, which he represented. She did this with all the grace and affability, all the genial tact and large-heartedness of a noble heart, which were the attributes of her beautiful and amiable person. She was unwearied in well-doing, in listening to all the petitions with which she was approached; she had for every complaint and every request an open ear; she not only promised to every applicant her intercession, but she made him presents, and was ever ready, by solicitations, flatteries, and expostulations, and, if necessary, even with tears, to entreat from her husband a mitigation of the punishment and sentence which he had decided upon in his just severity; and seldom had Bonaparte the courage to oppose her wishes. These were for Josephine glorious days of love and triumph. She depicts them herself in a letter to her aunt in plain, short words.

"The Duke de Serbelloni," writes she, "will tell you, my dear aunt, how I have been received in Italy; how, wherever I passed, they celebrated my arrival; how all the Italian princes, even the Duke of Tuscany, the emperor's brother, gave festivities in my honor. Well, then, I would prefer to live as a plain citizeness of France. I like not the honorable distinctions of this country. They weary me. It is true, my health inclines me to be sad. I often feel very ill. If fate would bring me good health, then I should be entirely happy. I possess the most amiable husband that can be found. I have no occasion to desire anything. My wishes are his. The whole day he is worshipping me as if I were a deity; it is impossible to find a better husband. He writes often to my children—he loves them much. He sent to Hortense, through M. Serbelloni, a beautiful enamelled repeating watch, ornamented with fine pearls; to Eugene he sent also a fine gold watch." *

* Aubenas, "Histoire de l'Impératrice Josephine," vol. i., p. 349.

But soon these days of quietness and happiness were to be broken; the armistice was drawing to a close, when, with redoubled energy, Bonaparte, who had received from the government the wished-for re-enforcements, longed to resume the war with Austria, which on her side had sent another army into Italy, under General Alvinzi, to relieve Mantua, and to deliver Wurmser from his peril.

On the 13th of August Bonaparte left Milan and returned to Brescia, where he established his headquarters, and where, with all the speed and restlessness of a warrior longing for victory, he made his preparations for the coming conflict.

But amid the anxieties, the cares, the chances of this new campaign, his heart remained behind in Milan with his Josephine; when the general began to rest, the lover began to breathe. No sooner were the battle-plans, the fight, the preparations and the dispositions accomplished, than all his thoughts returned to Josephine, and he had again recourse to his written correspondence with his adored wife; for although he longed so much to have her with him, yet he was unwilling to occasion her so much inconvenience and so many privations.

Bonaparte's letters are again way-marks during his glorious path of victory and triumph, while he was overrunning Italy with wondrous rapidity—but, instead of relating these conquests, we turn to his letters to Josephine. Already, on his way to Brescia, he had written her several times. The very day after reaching there, after having made the necessary military arrangements, Bonaparte wrote to her:

"Brescia, *the 14th Fructidor, Year IV. (August 31, 1795).*

"I am leaving for Verona. I have hoped in vain to receive a letter from you; this makes me wretched and restless. At the time of my departure, you were somewhat

suffering; I pray you, do not leave me in such a state of disquietude. You had promised me a greater punctuality; your tongue, then, chimed in with your heart . . . .; you, whom Nature has gifted with a sweet disposition, with joyousness, and every thing which is agreeable, how can you forget him who loves you so warmly? Three days without a letter from you! I have during that time written to you several. Separation is horrible; the nights are long, tiresome, and insipid; the days are monotonous.

"To-day, alone with thoughts, works, men, and their destructive schemes, I have not received from you a single note that I can press to my heart.

"Headquarters are broken up; I leave in one hour. I have this night received expresses from Paris; there was nothing for you but the enclosed letter, which will afford you some pleasure.

"Think on me; live for me; be often with your beloved, and believe that there is for him but one sorrow; that he shrinks only from this—to be no more loved by his Josephine. A thousand right sweet kisses, right tender, right exclusive kisses. BONAPARTE."

Three days after he tells her that he is now in the midst of war operations; that hostilities have begun again, and that he hopes in a few days to advance upon Trieste. But this occupied his mind less than his solicitude for Josephine. After a short paragraph on his military affairs, he continues:

"No letter from you yet; I am really anxious; but I am assured that you are well, and that you have made an excursion on the Como Lake. Every day I wait impatiently for the courier who is to bring me news from you; you know how precious this is to me. I live no longer when away from you; the joy of my life is to be near my sweet

Josephine. Think of me; write often, very often; this is the only remedy for separation; it is cruel, but I trust it will soon be over. BONAPARTE."

Meanwhile this separation was to last longer than Bonaparte had imagined. War held him entangled in its web so fast, that he had not time even to write to Josephine. In the next two letters he could only tell her, in a few lines, what had happened at the theatre of war; that he had again defeated Wurmser, and had surrounded him, and that he hopes to take Mantua. Even for his constant complaint about Josephine's slothfulness in writing, he finds no room in these short letters. In the next letter, however, it appears the more violently. He has no time to give her, as was his usual practice, any account of the war. He begins at once with the main object, which is—"Josephine has not written:"

"VERONA, *1st day of Complémentaires in Year V.*
"(*September 17, 1796*).

"I write to you often, my beloved one, but you write seldom to me. You are wicked and hateful, very hateful—as hateful as you are inconstant. It is indeed faithlessness to deceive a wretched man, a tender lover! Must he lose his rights because he is away, burdened with hardship and labor? Without his Josephine, without the certainty of her love, what is there on earth for him? What would he do here?

"We had yesterday a very bloody affair; the enemy has lost many men, and is well beaten. We have taken his advanced works before Mantua.

"Farewell, adored Josephine! One of these nights the doors will open with a loud crash: as a jealous man, I am in your arms!

"A thousand dear kisses! BONAPARTE."

But the doors were not to be opened on any of the fol-

lowing nights for the jealous one! The events of war were to keep him away a long time from his Josephine. The Austrian Generals Wurmser and Alvinzi, with their two armies, demanded all the energy and activity of Bonaparte. Meanwhile, as he was preparing for the great battles which were to decide the fate of Italy, his thoughts were always turned to his Josephine; his deep longings grew day by day, still he had no longer cause to complain that Josephine did not write, that she had forgotten him! Contrariwise, Josephine did write; she had, while he was writing her angry letters about her silence, written several times, for Bonaparte in the following letter says that he has received many letters from her, which, probably on account of the difficulties of communication, had been delayed. He had received them with the highest delight, and pressed them to his lips and heart. But no sooner had he rejoiced over them, than he complains that they are cold, reserved, and old. No word, no expression, satisfies his ardent love. He complains that her letters are cold, and then, when she dips her pen in the fire of tender love, he complains again that her glowing letters "turn his blood into fire, and stir up his whole being." Love, with all its wantonness and all its pains, holds him captive in its hands, and the general has no means of appeasing the lover.

The letter which complains of Josephine's coldness is dated

"MODENA, *26th Vendémiaire of the Year V.*
"*(October 17, 1796).*

"I was yesterday the whole day on the field. To-day I have kept my bed. Fever and a violent headache have debarred me from writing to my adored one; but I have received her letters, I pressed them to my lips and to my heart, and the anguish of a separation of hundreds of miles disappeared. At this moment I see you at my side, neither capricious nor angry, but soft, tender, and wrapped in that

goodness which is exclusively the attribute of my Josephine. It was a dream—judge if it could drive the fever away. Your letters are as cold as if you were fifty years old; they seem to have been composed after a marriage of fifteen years. One can see in them the friendship and sentiments of the winter of life. Pshaw! Josephine, . . . that is very naughty, very abominable, very treasonable on your part. What more remains to make me worthy of pity? All is already done! To love me no more! To hate me! Well, then, let it be so! Every thing humiliates but hatred, and indifference with its marmoreal pulse, its staring eyes, and its measured steps. A thousand thousand kisses as tender as my heart! I am somewhat better. I leave to-morrow. The English are cruising on the Mediterranean. Corsica is ours. Good news for France and for the army.

"BONAPARTE."

Bonaparte had gone to wage the last decisive battle. He writes to her from Verona a few lines that he has arrived there, and that he is just going to mount his horse to pursue the march. In this letter, however, he does not tell Josephine that General Vaubois, with his fugitive regiments, has been beaten by the Tyrolese, and that, driven from their mountains, he has arrived in Verona; that Alvinzi occupies the Tyrol and has pushed on to Brenta and to Etsch. Bonaparte was gathering his troops to drive away General Alvinzi, who had occupied the heights of Caldiero, from these important positions, and to take possession of them by main force. A violent and desperate struggle ensued, and the day ended with victory on the side of the Austrians. Bonaparte had to return to Verona; Alvinzi maintained himself on the heights.

To the irritated general, disappointed in his plans and humiliated, his love becomes his "*bête de souffrance*," upon which he takes vengeance for the defeat of Caldiero. Jose-

phine has to endure the flaming wrath of Bonaparte, in whom now general and lover are fused into one; but in his expressions of anger the general has no complaints—it is the lover who murmurs, who reprimands, and is irritated.

On the evening of the 12th November, the day of the defeat of Caldiero, Bonaparte returned to Verona. The next day he wrote to Josephine:

"VERONA, *the 3d Frimaire, Year V. (November 13, 1796).*

"I love you no more; on the contrary, I hate you. You are a wicked creature, very inconsistent, very stupid, very silly. You do not write to me. You do not love your husband. You know how much pleasure your letters would afford, and you do not write to him even six lines, which you can readily scribble out.

"How, then, do you begin the day, madame? What important occupation takes away your time from writing to your very excellent lover? What new inclination chokes and thrusts aside the tender, abiding love which you have promised him? What can this wonderful, this new love be, which lays claim to all your time, and rules over your days, and hinders you from occupying yourself with your husband? Josephine, be on your guard; on some evil night the doors will be burst open and I shall stand before you!

"In truth, I am restless, my dear one, because I receive no news from you. Write me at once four pages about those things, which fill my heart with emotion and pleasure.

"I trust soon to fold you in my arms, and then I will overwhelm you with a million of kisses burning like the equator. BONAPARTE."

Whilst Bonaparte was pursuing and engaging with Wurmser and Alvinzi in bloody hostilities, and writing to Josephine tender and angry letters of a lover ever jealous, ever dissatisfied and envious, Josephine was leading in Milan

a life full of pleasure and amusement, full of splendor and triumphs, of receptions and festivities. Every new victory, every onward movement, was for the inhabitants of Milan, and her proud and rich nobles, a fresh and welcome occasion to celebrate and glorify the wife of General Bonaparte, and, through her, the hero who was to take away from their necks the yoke of the Austrian, and who suspected not that he was so soon to place upon them another yoke.

Josephine, true to the wishes and commands of Bonaparte, accepted these festivities and this homage with all the affability and grace which distinguished her. She had by degrees become familiar with this ceaseless homage, which at first seemed so wearisome; by degrees she took delight in this life of pleasure, in the incense of adulation, and the brilliancies of fame. All the indolence, the dreamy carelessness, the graceful abandonment of the creole had been again awakened in her. She cradled herself playfully on the lulling, bright waves of pleasure as an insect with golden wings, and she smiled complacently at the stream of encircling festivities.

Bonaparte had told her to use all the arts of a woman to bind the Milanese and the Lombards to herself and to her husband. With her smiles she was to continue the conquest begun by Bonaparte's sword.

She could not, therefore, live alone in quiet solitude; she could not remain in obscurity while her husband was performing his part on the theatre of war; she could not, by an appearance of gravity, or by a clouded brow, furnish occasion to the suspicion that there existed doubt in the future success of her husband, or in his prosperity and victory.

Roses were to crown her brow—a cheerful smile was to beam on her countenance; with joyous spirit, she was to take part in the festivities and pleasures—that the Milanese might see with what earnest confidence she believed in Napoleon's star! But Bonaparte, with all the instinct of a

genuine lover, had read the deepest secret of her soul; he was envious and jealous, because he felt that Josephine did not belong to him with her whole heart, her whole being, all her emotions and thoughts. Her heart, which had received from the past so many scars and wounds, could not yet have blossomed anew; it had been warmed by the glow of Bonaparte's love, but it was not yet thoroughly penetrated with that passion which Bonaparte so painfully missed, so intensely craved.

The earnest, unfettered nature of his love intimidated her, while it ravished and flattered her vanity; but her heart was not entirely his, it had yet room for her children, for her friends, for the things of this world!

Josephine loved Bonaparte with that soft, modest, and retiring affection, which only by degrees—by the storms of anguish, jealousy, agony, and the possibility of losing him —was to be fanned into that vitality and glow which never cooled again in her heart, and which at last gave her the death-stroke.

She therefore thought she was fulfilling her task when she, while Bonaparte was fighting with weapons, conquered with smiles, and received the homage of the conquered only as a tribute which they brought through her to the warlike genius of her husband.

Meanwhile Bonaparte had taken vengeance for his defeat at Caldiero. Through a *ruse* of war, he had decoyed Alvinzi from his safe and impregnable position into one where he could meet him with his army anxious for the fray, and give him battle.

The gigantic struggle lasted three days—and the close of the third day brought to the conqueror, Bonaparte, the laurel-wreath of undying glory, which, more enduring and dazzling than an imperial crown, surrounded with a halo the hero's brow long after that crown had fallen from it.

This was the victory of Arcola, which Bonaparte himself decided by snatching from the flag-bearer the standard of the retreating regiment, and rushing with it, through a shower of balls, over the bridge of death and destruction, and, with a voice heard above the thundering cannon, shouting jubilant to his soldiers—"*En avant, mes amis!*" And bravely the soldiers followed him—a brilliant victory was the result.

Elevated by this deed, the grandest and most glorious of his heroic career, Napoleon returned to Verona on the 19th November. The whole city—all Lombardy—sang to his praise their inspired hymns, and greeted with enthusiasm the conqueror of Arcola. He, however, wanted a sweeter reward; and, after obtaining a second victory, on the 23d of November, by defeating Wurmser near Mantua, he longed to rest and enjoy an hour's happiness in the arms of his Josephine.

From Verona he wrote to her on the day after the battle of Mantua, on the 24th of November:

"I hope soon to be in your arms, my beloved one; I love you to madness! I write by this courier for Paris. All is well. Wurmser was defeated yesterday under Mantua. Your husband needs nothing but the love of his Josephine to be happy. BONAPARTE."

But the most terrible doubts hung yet over this love. The letter in which Napoleon announced his coming had not reached Josephine; and, as the next day he came to Milan with all the cravings and impatience of a lover, he did not find Josephine there.

She had not suspected his coming; she had not dreamed that the commanding officer could stop in his victorious course and give way to the lover. She thought him far away; and, ever faithful to Bonaparte's direction to assist

him in the conquest of Italy, she had accepted an invitation from the city of Genoa, which had lately and gladly entered into alliance with France. The most brilliant festivities welcomed her in this city of wealth and palaces, and "*Genova la superba*" gathered all its magnificence, all the splendor of its glory, to offer, under the eyes of all Europe, her solemn homage to the wife of the celebrated hero of Arcola.

While Josephine, with joyous pride was receiving this homage, Bonaparte, gloomy and murmuring, sat in his cabinet at Milan, and wrote to her:

"MILAN, *the 7th Frimaire, Year V.,*
"*Three o'clock, afternoon (November 27, 1796).*

"I have just arrived in Milan, and rush to your apartments. I have left every thing to see you, to press you in my arms; . . . . you are not there! You are pursuing a circle of festivities through the cities. You go away from me at my approach; you trouble yourself no more about your dear Napoleon. A spleen has made you love him; inconstancy renders you indifferent.

"Accustomed to dangers, I know a remedy against *ennui* and the troubles of life. The wretchedness I endure is not to be measured; I am entitled not to expect it.

"I will wait here until the 9th. Do not trouble yourself. Pursue your pleasures; happiness is made for you. The whole world is too happy when it can please you, and your husband alone is very, very unhappy.

"BONAPARTE."

But this cry of anguish from this crushed heart did not reach Josephine; and the courier, who next day came to Milan from Genoa, brought from Josephine only a letter with numerous commissions for Berthier. Bonaparte's anger and sorrow knew no bounds, and he at once writes to

her with all the utterances of despair and complaint of a lover, and the proud wrath of an injured husband:

"MILAN, *the 8th Frimaire, Year V., eight o'clock, evening.*

"The courier whom Berthier had sent to Milan has just arrived. You have had no time to write to me; that I can understand very well. In the midst of pleasures and amusements it would have been too much for you to make the smallest sacrifice for me. Berthier has shown me the letter you wrote to him. It is not my purpose to trouble you in your arrangements or in the festivities which you are enjoying; I am not worth the trouble; the happiness or the misery of a man you love no longer has not the right to interest you.

"As regards myself, to love you and you alone, to make you happy, to do nothing that can wrong you in any way, is the desire and object of my life.

"Be happy, have nothing to reproach me, trouble not yourself about the felicity of a man who only breathes in your life, who finds enjoyment only in your happiness. When I claim from you a love which would approach mine, I am wrong: how can one expect that a cobweb should weigh as much as gold? When I sacrifice to you all my wishes, all my thoughts, all the moments of my life, I merely obey the spell which your charms, your character, your whole person, exercise over my wretched heart. I am wrong, for Nature has not endowed me with the power of binding you to me; but I deserve from Josephine in return at least consideration and esteem, for I love her unto madness, and love her exclusively.

"Farewell, adorable wife! farewell, my Josephine! May fate pour into my heart every trouble and every sorrow; but may it send to my Josephine serene and happy days! Who deserves it more than she? When it is well understood that she loves me no more, I will garner up into my heart my

deep anguish, and be content to be in many things at least useful and good to her.

"I open this letter once more to send you a kiss . . . . ah! Josephine . . . . Josephine! BONAPARTE."

Meanwhile it was not yet well understood that Josephine loved him no more; for as soon as she knew of Bonaparte's presence in Milan, she hastened to dispatch him a courier, and to apprise him of her sudden departure.

Bonaparte did not leave Milan on the 9th; he remained there, waiting for Josephine, to lift her up in his arms from her carriage, and to bear her into her apartments; to enjoy with her a few happy days of a quiet, domestic, and mutual love, all to themselves.

His presence with the army, however, soon became a matter of necessity; for Alvinzi was advancing with considerable re-enforcements, with two army corps to the relief of Mantua, and Bonaparte, notwithstanding his pressing remonstrances to the Directory, having received but few re-enforcements and very little money, had to exert all his powers and energy to press a few advantages from the superior forces of the enemy. Everywhere his presence and personal action were needed; and, constantly busy with war, ever sword in hand, he could not, for long weeks, even once take pen *in hand* and write to his Josephine. His longings had to subside before the force of circumstances, which claimed the general's whole time.

On the 3d of February, 1797, he again finds time to send her a few lines, to say that he is breaking up and going to Rimini. Then, after Alvinzi had been again defeated, after the fortress of Mantua had capitulated, Bonaparte had to break up again and go to Rome, to require from the pope the reason why he had made common cause with Austria, and shown himself the enemy of the French republic.

In Bologna he lingered a few days, as Josephine, in compliance with his wishes, had come there to make amends by her presence for so long a separation.

She remained in Bologna, while Bonaparte advanced toward the city of the Church. But the gloomy quietude, the constant rumors of war, the threatening dangers, the intrigues with which she was surrounded, the hostile exertions of the priests, the want of society, of friendly faces, every thing had a tendency to make Josephine's residence in Bologna very disagreeable, and to bring on sadness and nervousness.

In this gloomy state of mind she writes to Bonaparte that she feels sick, exhausted and helpless; that she is anxious to return to Paris. He answers her from Ancona:

"The 8th Pluviose, Year V. (February 16, 1797).

"You are sad, you are sick, you write to me no longer, you wish to return to Paris! Do you no longer love your friend? This thought makes me very unhappy. My dear friend, life is intolerable to me, since I have heard of your sadness.

"I send you at once Moscati to take care of you. My health is somewhat feeble; my cold hangs on. I pray you spare yourself, and love me as much as I love you, and do write every day. My restlessness is horrible.

"I have given orders to Moscati to accompany you to Ancona, if you will come. I will write to you and let you know where I am.

"I may perhaps make peace with the pope, and then will soon be with you; it is the most intense desire of my life.

"I send a hundred kisses. Think not that any thing can equal my love, unless it be my solicitude for you. Write to me every day yourself, my dearly-beloved one!

"BONAPARTE."

But Josephine, in her depressed state of mind, and her nervous irritability, did not have the courage to draw nearer the scenes of war, and she dreaded to face again such dangers as once she had encountered in Brescia and on her journey to Florence. She had not been able to overcome the indolence of the creole so much as to write to Bonaparte. Fully conscious of his love and pardon, she relied upon them when, in her reluctance to every exertion, she announced to him, through the physician Moscati, that she would not come to Ancona, but would wait for him in Bologna.

This news made a very painful impression upon Bonaparte, and filled him with sorrow, though it reached him on a day in which he had obtained a new triumph, a spiritual victory without any shedding of blood. The pope, frightened at the army detachments approaching Rome, as well as at the menacing language of the victor of Arcola, signed a peace with the French republic, and with the general whose sword had bowed into the dust all the princes of Italy, and freed all the population from their duties as subjects. Bonaparte announced this to Josephine, and it is evident how important it was to him that this news should precede even his love-murmurings and reproaches. His letter was dated

"TOLENTINO, *the 1st Ventose, Year V. (February 19, 1797).*

"Peace with Rome is signed. Bologna, Ferrara, Romagna fall into the hands of the French republic. The pope has to pay us in a short time thirty millions, and gives us many precious objects of art.

"I leave to-morrow for Ancona, and then for Rimini, Ravenna, and Bologna. If your health permits, come over to meet me in Ravenna, but, I implore you, spare yourself.

"Not a word from your hand! What have I done? To think only of you, to love but you, to live but for my wife,

to enjoy only my beloved's happiness, does this deserve such a cruel treatment from her? My friend, I implore you, think of me, and write to me every day. Either you are sick, or you love me no longer. Do you imagine, then, that my heart is of marble? Why do you have so little sympathy with my sorrow? You must have a very poor idea of me! That I cannot believe. You, to whom Nature has imparted so much understanding, so much amiability, and so much beauty, you, who alone can rule in my heart, you know, without doubt, what power you have over me!

"Write to me, think of me, and love me.

"Yours entirely, yours for life,

"BONAPARTE."

This is the last letter of Bonaparte to Josephine during his first Italian campaign—the last at least in the series of letters which Queen Hortense has made public, as the most beautiful and most glorious monument to her mother.*

We have dwelt upon them because these letters, like sunbeams, throw a bright light on the new pathway of Josephine's life—because they are an eloquent and splendid testimony to the love which Josephine had inspired in her young husband, and also to her amiableness, to her sweetness of disposition, to her grace, and to all the noble and charming qualities which procured her so much admiration and affection, and which still caused her to be loved, sought for and celebrated, when she had to descend from the height of a throne, and became the deserted, divorced wife of the man who loved her immeasurably, and who so often had sworn to her that this love would only end with his life!

* "Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine et de Joséphine à Napoléon et à sa fille. Londres et Leipzic, 1833."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE COURT OF MONTEBELLO.

On the 18th of April were finally signed, in Leoben, the preliminaries of peace between Austria and France, and which finally put an end to this cruel war. Austria was compelled to acknowledge herself defeated, for even the Archduke Charles, who had pushed forward from the Rhine with his army to oppose the conqueror of Wurmser and of Alvinzi, had not been able to arrest Bonaparte in his victorious career.

Bonaparte had publicly declared he would march toward Vienna, and dictate to the Emperor of Germany, in his very palace, terms of peace. He was at the point of carrying into execution this bold plan. Since the battle of Tagliamento, on the 16th of March, the army of the archduke was broken, and he could no longer prevent Bonaparte from marching with his army over Laybach and Trieste into Germany. On the 25th of March, Bonaparte entered into Klagenfurt; and now that he was but forty miles from the capital, the Austrian court began to tremble at the approach of this army of *sans-culottes* who, under the leadership of General Bonaparte, had been transformed into heroes. She therefore accepted the propositions of peace made by Bonaparte, and, as already said, its preliminaries were signed in Leoben.

Now Bonaparte could rest after such constant and bloody work, now he could again hasten to his Josephine, who was waiting for him in the palace of Serbelloni.

The whole city—all Lombardy—was with her, awaiting him. His journey from Leoben to Milan was a continuous triumph, which, however, reached its culminating point at his entrance into the city. Milan had adorned herself for this day as a bride to receive her hero. From every balcony

waved the united French and Italian standards, costly tapestries were hanging down, every window was occupied by beautiful women gayly attired, and who, with large bouquets of flowers and waving handkerchiefs, greeted the conqueror. All the dignitaries of the city went to meet him in processional pomp; from every tower sounded the welcome chimes, and the compact masses of the people in the streets and on the roofs of the houses filled the air with the jubilant shout: "Long live the deliverer of Italy! the conqueror of Austria!"

Josephine, surrounded by ladies of the highest aristocracy of Lombardy, received her husband in the Palace Serbelloni. With radiant smiles, and yet with tears in her eyes, she received him, her heart swelling with a lofty joy at this ovation to Bonaparte; and through the glorification of this victory he appeared to her more beautiful, more worthy of love, than ever before. On this day of his return from so many battles and victories her heart gave itself up with all its power, all its unreservedness and fulness, to this wondrous man who had won so many important battles, and who bowed before her alone with all the submissive humility of a conquered man! From this day she loved him with that warm, strong love which was to end only with her death.

Josephine had good reason to be happy on this day, for it brought her not only her husband, but also a new source of happiness, her son, her dear Eugene. Bonaparte had sent for him from Paris, and given him a commission of second lieutenant in the first regiment of hussars, and had also appointed him adjutant of the commanding general of the army of Italy, perhaps as much to give to Josephine a new proof of his affection as to attach Eugene to his person, for whom he felt the love of a father.

Near the returned general, Josephine, to her supreme delight, saw her dear son, from whom she had been separated so long; and Eugene, whom she had left in Paris a

mere boy, presented himself to her in Milan, in his officer's uniform, as a youth, with countenance beaming with joy and eyes full of lustre, ready to enter upon fame's pathway, on which his step-father, so brilliant a model, was walking before him. The maternal heart of Josephine felt both love and pride at the sight of this young man, so remarkable for his healthy appearance, and his youthful vigor and genius, and she thanked Bonaparte with redoubled love for the joyous surprise which his considerate affection had prepared for her.

Now began for Josephine and Bonaparte happy days, illumined by all the splendor of festivities, of fealty exhibited, of triumphs realized. After lingering a few days in Milan, Bonaparte, with his wife, the whole train of his friends, his adjutants and servants, removed to the pleasure-castle of Montebello, near Milan.

Here, amid rich natural scenery, in this large, imposing castle, which, built on the summit of a hill, mantled with olive-groves and vineyards, afforded on all sides a view of the surrounding, smiling plains of Lombardy—here Bonaparte wished to rest from the hardships and dangers of his last campaign; here, he wished to organize the great Italian republic which was then the object of his exertions, and whose iron crown he afterward coveted to place on his head. At Montebello he wished to enact new laws for Italy, create new institutions, reduce to silence, with threatening voice, the opposition of those who dared to oppose to the new law of liberty the old centennial rights of possession and of citizenship.

Italy was to be free, such was the will of her deliverer; and he took great care not to let any one suspect or read the secret thoughts which he kept hid behind the pompous proclamations of his authority. He therefore answered evasively and vaguely those who came to fathom his designs and to become acquainted with his plans.

The Grand-duke of Tuscany sent to Montebello for this purpose, the Marquis Manfredini. He was instructed to ask General Bonaparte if it was his intention to destroy the grand-duchy of Tuscany, and to incorporate its territory into the great Italian republic. The marquis implored Bonaparte with persuasive, touching accents, to tell him what his plans were, and if he would allow Tuscany to subsist as an independent state.

Bonaparte, smiling, shrugged his shoulders: "Signor marquis," said he, "you remind me of that creditor who once asked the Cardinal de Rohan when he wished to pay him. The cardinal simply answered: 'My dear sir, do not be so curious.' If your grand-duke will keep quiet, he will suffer no injury."

Napoleon exhibited less friendliness and good-nature toward the republic of Venice, which had also sent her delegates to Montebello for the sake of reconciling the general, who had sworn vengeance against the republic, because a sort of Sicilian Vespers had been organized there against the French; and because, especially in Verona, and throughout the Venetian provinces, thousands of Frenchmen had been murdered by the revolted peasants, whom the fanatical priesthood had stirred to sedition.

Now, that Bonaparte had defeated the Grand-duke Charles, the hope of the rebels, Venice humbly sent her most distinguished sons to plead for forgiveness and indulgence, and to promise full reparation. But Napoleon received them with contempt and threatening anger, and to their humble petitions replied in a thundering voice, "I will be an Attila to Venice!"

Meanwhile the same general, who swore the ruin of Venice, showed himself conciliating and lenient toward Rome, and instead of being an Attila, he endeavored to be a preserver and a protector.

The Directory in Paris was not fully satisfied with the

peace which Bonaparte had concluded with the pope. They thought Napoleon had been too lenient with him; that he ought to have taken Rome from him, as he tore away Milan from the Emperor of Germany. The five rulers of France went so far as to make reproaches against Bonaparte for his leniency, and to require from him the downfall of the pope, and with him that of Catholicism.

But Bonaparte had the boldness to oppose these demands of the Directory, and to set up his will in defiance to their supreme authority.

He wrote to the Directory: "You say with reason that the Roman religion will long be the enemy of the republic; that is very true, but it is equally true that, on account of the great distance you are from the scene of events, you cannot measure the amount of difficulty there is in carrying out your orders.

"You wish to destroy the Catholic Church in a city where it has ruled so many years. Believe me, it is useless to burden ourselves with fruitless labor. We have already enough to do; to defeat our enemies on the field of battle, it is not necessary to arouse all Europe against us—even the heretics, through policy, would defend the cause of the Holy See. Are you fully convinced that France would calmly look on? France needs a religious worship: that which you propose cannot, on account of its simplicity, replace this one. Follow my advice: let the pope be pope! If you bury his earthly power, acknowledge at least his spiritual authority. Force him not to seek refuge at a foreign court, where by his mere presence it would gain an immense ascendency. Italy wants religion and the pope. If she is wounded in her faith, she will be hostile to us, while now she is peaceably inclined. I repeat, the present difficulties are too weighty, to add new ones. Who can fathom the future? Who can assume the responsibility of such a deed as the one you propose? I shall not, therefore, do

it, since you leave it with me to inform you on the subject. I consider it dangerous to conjure up fanaticism. The Catholic religion is that of the arts, and the arts are absolutely necessary to Italy's welfare. Be sure that if you destroy the former, you give a fatal blow to the latter, and that the Italians are good accountants. Ponder well these matters, then, and be sure that Catholicism has ceased to exist in France. Are you well satisfied that no one there will go back to it?"

While in Montebello, though the sword had been laid aside, Bonaparte was still busy with war affairs, and the quarrels of princes and nations. Josephine at the same time passed there the honored life of a mighty princess, whose favors and intercessions the great and the powerful of earth endeavored to obtain by every conceivable means. The ladies of the aristocracy of Milan were eager to pay their homage to the wife of the deliverer; the courts of Italy, as well as other parts of Europe, sent ambassadors to General Bonaparte; and these gentlemen were naturally zealous in offering their incense to Josephine, in surrounding her with courtly and flattering attentions. The Marquis de Gallo, the ambassador of Spain at the court of Verona, came with the Austrian ambassador, the Count von Meerfeld, to Montebello, to enter into negotiations about the peace which was to form the precious key-stone to the preliminaries of Leoben; and these two gentlemen, who opposed to the plain manners of Bonaparte's companions-in-arms the very essence of refined, polished, and witty courtiers, rivalled each other in showing to Josephine their highest consideration by their festivities and amusements; to win her favor and interest through the most complacent and considerate attention to all her views, wishes, and plans.

Josephine received all this homage with the enchanting grace and smiling quietude of a woman who, without exalta-

tion or pride, feels no surprise at any flattery or homage, but kindly and thankfully accepts what is due to her. Among this brilliant Italian aristocracy which surrounded her—among the ambassadors of the powers who sued not so much for alliance with France as for General Bonaparte's favor—among the generals and superior officers who had shared with Bonaparte the dangers of the battle-field and the laurels of victory—among learned men, artists, and poets, whom Bonaparte had often invited to Montebello—among so brilliant, so wealthy, so superior, so intelligent a society, Josephine shone as the resplendent sun around which all these planets moved, and from which they all received life, light, and happiness. She received the ambassadors of sovereigns with the dignity and affability of a princess; she conversed with the most distinguished ladies in cheerful simplicity, and with the unaffected joyousness and harmless innocency of a young maiden; she conversed with men of learning and artists in profound and serious tones, about their labors, their efforts, and success; she allowed the generals to relate the momentous events of the late great battles, and her eye shone with deeper pride and pleasure when from the mouth of the brave she heard the enthusiastic praise of her husband.

Then her keen looks would be directed toward Bonaparte, who perchance stood in a window recess, engaged in some grave, solemn conversation with an eminent ambassador; her eyes again would glance from her husband to her son, to this young officer of seventeen years, who now laughed, jested, and played, as a boy, and then with respectful attention listened to the conversation of the generals, and whose countenance beamed with inspiration as they spoke to him of the mighty deeds of war and the plans of battle of his step-father, whom Eugene loved with the affection of a son, and the enthusiasm of a disciple who looks up to and reveres his master.

Yes, Josephine was happy in these days of Montebello. The past, with its sad memories, its deceptions and errors, had sunk behind her, and a luminous future sent its rays upon her at the side of the man whom jubilant Italy proclaimed "her deliverer," and whom Josephine's joyous heart acknowledged to be her hero, her beloved. For now she loved him truly, not with that love of fifteen years past, with the marmoreal pulse, of which Bonaparte had spoken to her in his letters, but with all the depth and glow of which a woman's heart is capable, with all the passion and jealousy of which the heart of a creole alone is susceptible.

Happy, sunny days of Montebello! days full of love, of poetry, of beauty, of happiness!—full of the first, genial, undisturbed, mutual communion!—days of the first triumphs, of the first homage, of the first dawn of a brilliant future! Never could the memory of those days fade away from Josephine's heart; never could the empress, in the long series of her triumphs and rejoicings, point to an hour like one of those she had, as the wife of the general, enjoyed at Montebello!

Every day brought new festivities, new joys, new receptions: balls, official banquets, select friendly dinners, came by turns; in brilliant *soirées*, they received the aristocracy of Lombardy, who, with ever-growing zeal, struggled for the honor of being received at the court of Montebello, and to see the doors of the drawing-room of the wife of General Bonaparte open to them. Sometimes parties were made up for a chase, of which Berthier acted as master, and who was not a whit behind in organizing hunting-parties in the style of those of the former court of Versailles, where he once had acted as page.

At times, in the warm days of May, the whole company went out together on the large and splendid piazza which ran along the castle, on the garden side, and which was supported by slender marble columns, and whose roof, made of

thin wire-work, was thickly shaded by the foliage of the vine, the ivy, and the delicate leaves of the passion-flower. Here, resting on the marble settees, one listened in blessed happiness to the music of bands secreted in some myrtle-grove and playing military symphonies or patriotic melodies. Then, as the evening faded away, when the court of Montebello, as the Italians now called the residence of the general of the republic, had no brilliant reception, they gathered in the drawing-room, where Josephine, with all the affability of a lady from the great world, received her guests, and with all the modesty and grace of a simple housewife served herself the tea.

These quiet social evenings in the little drawing-room of Josephine, away from excitement, were among Bonaparte's happiest moments; there, for a few hours at least, he forgot the mighty cares and schemes which occupied his mind, and abandoned himself to the joys of society, and to a cheerful intercourse with his family and friends. In these quiet evenings Josephine exerted all the art and refinement of her great social nature to render Bonaparte cheerful and to amuse him. She sometimes organized a party of *vingt-et-un*, and Bonaparte with his cards was as eager for the victory as in days past he had been with his soldiers. Very often, when success did not favor him, and his cards were not such as suited him, the great general would condescend to correct fate (*de corriger la fortune*); and he was much delighted when in his expertness he succeeded, and, thanks to his correction of fate, obtained the victory over his playmates. When the *parti* was ended, they went out on the terrace to enjoy the balmy air and refreshing coolness of the evening, and to take delight in witnessing the enchanting spectacle afforded by the thousands of little stars with which the fire-flies illumined the darkness of the summer night and encircled the lake as with a coronet of emeralds.

When they grew tired of this, they returned to the

drawing-room to listen to Josephine's fine, full, soul-like voice singing the songs of her island-home, or else to find amusement in the recital of fairy tales and marvellous stories. None understood this last accomplishment better than Bonaparte; and it required only the gracious request, the lovely smiles of his Josephine, to convert the general into one of those *improvisatores* who with their stories, more resembling a dramatic representation than a narrative, could exalt the Italian mind into ecstasy, and be ever sure to attract an attentive audience.

Bonaparte understood the art of holding his audience in suspense, and keeping them in breathless attention, quite as well as an improvisator of the Place of St. Mark or of Toledo Street. His stories were always full of the highest dramatic action and thrilling effect; and it was his greatest triumph when he saw his hearers turn pale, and when Josephine, shuddering, clung anxiously to him, as if seeking from the soldier's hand protection against the fearful ghosts he had evoked.

After the marvellous stories came grave scientific conversations with men of learning, whom Bonaparte had invited for the sake of deriving from their intercourse both interest and instruction. Among these were the renowned mathematicians Maria Fontana, Monge, and Berthelet; and the famous astronomer Oriani, whom Bonaparte, through a very flattering autographic note, had invited to Montebello.

But Oriani, little accustomed to society and to conversation with any one but learned men, was very reluctant to come to Montebello, and would gladly have avoided it had he not been afraid of exciting the wrath of the great warrior. Bonaparte, surrounded by his generals, his staff-officers and adjutants, was in the large and splendidly-illumined drawing-room when Oriani made his appearance.

The *savant*, timid and embarrassed, remained near the door, and dared not advance a single step farther on this

brilliant floor, where the lights of the chandeliers were reflected, and which filled the *savant* with more bewilderment than the star-bespangled firmament.

But Bonaparte's keen eye understood at once his newly-arrived guest; he advanced eagerly toward him, and as Oriani, stammering and embarrassed, was endeavoring to say something, but grew silent in the midst of his speech, the former smilingly asked:

"What troubles you so much? You are among your friends; we honor science, and I willingly bow to it."

"Ah, general," sighed Oriani, sorrowfully, "this magnificence dazzles me."

Bonaparte shrugged his shoulders. "What!" said he, looking around with a contemptuous glance on the mirrors and rich tapestries which adorned the walls, and on the glittering chandeliers, the embroidered uniforms of the generals, and the costly toilets of the ladies—"what, do you call this magnificence? Can these miserable splendors blind the man who every night contemplates the far more lofty and impressive glories of the skies?"

The *savant*, recalled by these warning words of Bonaparte to the consciousness of his own dignity, soon recovered his quiet demeanor and conversed long and gladly with the general, who never grew tired of putting questions to him, and of gaining from him information.

But there were also cloudy moments in Montebello, oftentimes overshadowing the serene sunshine. They came from France—from Rome—and there were even some which had their origin in Montebello. These clouds which were formed in Montebello, and which caused slight showers of tears with Josephine, and little tempests of anger with Bonaparte, were certainly not of a very serious nature; they owed their origin to a lapdog, and this pet dog was Fortuné, the same which in days gone by had been the letter-carrier between Josephine and her children when she

was in the Carmelite prison. Notwithstanding Fortuné had become old and peevish, Josephine and her children loved him for the sake of past reminiscences, while Bonaparte simply hated and detested him. Bonaparte had, however, perhaps without wishing it, erected for him an abiding monument in the "Mémorial de Ste. Hélène," where he gave a report of his hostilities with the lapdog Fortuné, along with those of his wars with the European powers.

"I was then," says Bonaparte, in his "Mémorial," "the ruler of Italy, but in my own house I had nothing to say; there Josephine's will was supreme. There was an ugly, growling personage, at war with everybody, whose bad qualities made him intolerable to me and to others, yet he was an important individual, who was by Josephine and her children flattered from morning till evening, and who was the object of their most delicate attentions. Fortuné, to me a hateful beast, was a horrible lapdog, with crooked legs and deformed body, without the slightest beauty or kindness, but of a most malicious disposition. I would gladly have killed him, and often prayed Heaven to deliver me from him. This happiness was, however, reserved for me in Montebello. A bull-dog which belonged to my cook became tired of his churlish incivilities, and not having the same considerateness as the rest of the inmates of the palace of Montebello, he attacked the detestable animal so violently as to kill him on the spot. Then began tears and sighs in the house. Josephine could not be comforted; Eugene wept, and I myself against my will put on a sorrowful countenance. But I gained nothing by this fortunate accident. After Fortuné had been stuffed, sung in sonnets, and made immortal by funeral discourses, he was replaced by two setters, male and female. Then came the amiable displays and the bickerings of this love-couple, and afterward their progeny. So that I knew not what to do.

"Soon after this, as I was walking in the park, I noticed

my cook, who, as soon as he saw me, disappeared on a side-path.

"'Are you afraid of me?' said I.

"'Ah, general,' replied he, timidly, 'you have good reason to be angry with me.'

"'I? What have you done?'

"'My unfortunate dog has indeed killed poor little Fortuné.'

"'Where is your dog?'

"'He is in the city. God have mercy on us! he dares not come here.'

"'Listen, my good fellow' (but I spoke in a low voice, for fear of being heard), 'let your dog run about just as he likes—perhaps he may deliver me from the others.'

"But this happiness was not in reserve for me. Josephine, not satisfied with dogs, soon after this procured a cat, which brought me into a state of despair; for this detestable animal was the most vicious of its race. . . . ." *

The strifes with Fortuné, with the setters, and with the cat, troubled Bonaparte less than the intrigues which his enemies in Italy, as well as in France, stirred up against him, and through them endeavored to destroy him.

In Italy it was the priests who had sworn deadly enmity to Bonaparte, and who, with all the weapons which the arsenal of the Church, fanaticism, and superstition, furnished them, fought against the general who had dared to break the power of the pope, and to restrict within narrower limits the rule of the priests. It was these priests who continually made the most furious opposition to the ascendency which Bonaparte had won over the Italian mind, and sought constantly to rouse up, within the minds of the people, opposition to him.

One day, Marmont announced that a certain Abbé Sergi

* "Mémorial de Ste. Hélène."

was exciting the peasants against the French, and especially against Bonaparte; that he was preaching sedition and rebellion in Christ's name, and was showing to the ignorant laborers a letter, which he had received from Christ, in which it was declared that General Bonaparte was an atheist and a heretic, whom one ought to destroy and drive away from Italy's sacred soil.

Bonaparte at once ordered Marmont to arrest this Abbé Sergi, who lived in Poncino, and to bring him to Montebello. His orders were followed, and, after a few days, the captive abbé was brought before the general. He seemed cheerful, unaffected, and assumed the appearance of being unconscious of guilt.

"Are you the man," exclaimed Bonaparte, "to whom Christ writes letters from Paradise?"

"Ah! signor general, you are joking," replied the abbé, smiling—but one of Bonaparte's angry looks fell upon his broad, well-fed face, and forced the priest into silence.

"I am not joking," answered Bonaparte, angrily; "you, however, are joking with the peasants, since you are telling these poor, superstitious men that you are in correspondence with Christ."

"Alas! signor general," sighed the abbé, with contrite mien, "I wanted to do something in the defence of our cause, and what can a poor clergyman do?—he has no weapons—"

"Mind that in future you procure other weapons!" interrupted Bonaparte, vehemently. "That will be better for you than to dare use the Deity for your schemes of wickedness. I order you to receive no more letters from Paradise, not even from Christ. Correspond with your equals, and be on your guard, or you will soon find that I can punish the disobedient!".

The abbé bowed penitently, and with tears in his eyes.

Bonaparte turned his back to him, and ordered him to be taken to Poncino.

From that day, however, much as he hated General Bonaparte, the Abbé Sergi received no more letters from Paradise.

Nevertheless, the letters of the Abbé Sergi were not those which gave the most solicitude to Bonaparte; much worse were those he received from Paris, which gave him an account of the persevering intrigues of his enemies, and the malicious slanders that were circulated against him by the Directory, who were envious of his power and superiority, and which mischievous and poisonous calumnies were re-echoed in the newspapers.

These insidious attacks of the journals, more than any thing else, excited Bonaparte's vehement anger. The hero who, on the battle-field, trembled not before the balls which whizzed about his head, had a violent dislike to those insect-stings of critics who, like wasps humming round about the laurel-wreath on his brow, ever found between the leaves of his fame some place where with their stings they could wound him, and who was as sensitive as a young blameless maiden would be against the wasp-stings of slander.

This irritable sensitiveness led him to consider those detestable attacks of the journals worth a threatening denunciation to the Directory.

"Citizen-directors," wrote he to them, "I owe you an open confession; my heart is depressed and filled with horror through the constant attacks of the Parisian journals. Sold to the enemies of the republic, they rush upon me, who am boldly defending the republic. 'I am keeping the plunder,' whilst I am defeating them; 'I affect despotism,' whilst I speak only as general-in-chief; 'I assume supreme power,' and yet I submit to law! Every thing I do is turned to a crime against me; the poison streams over me.

"Were any one in Italy to dare give utterance to the

one-thousandth part of those calumnies, I would impose upon him an awful silence!

"In Paris, this is allowed to go on unpunished, and your tolerance is an encouragement. The Directory is thus producing the impression that it is opposed to me. If the directors suspect me, let them say so, and I will justify myself. If they are convinced of my uprightness, let them defend me.

"In this circle of argument, I include the Directory with me, and cannot go beyond it. My desire is, to be useful to my country. Must I, for reward, drink the cup of poison?

"I can no longer be satisfied with empty, evasive arguments; and if justice is not done to me, then I must take it myself. Therefore, I am yours. Salutation and brotherly love. BONAPARTE."

But all these vexations, hostilities, and calumnies, were, however, as already said, mere clouds, which now and then obscured the bright sunshine at the court of Montebello. At a smile or a loving word from Josephine, they flew away rapidly, and the sunshine again in all its splendor, the pleasures, feasts, and joys, continued in their undisturbed course. All Italy did homage to the conqueror, and it was therefore very natural that sculptors and painters should endeavor to draw some advantage from this enthusiasm for its deliverer, and that they should endeavor to represent to the admirers of Bonaparte his peculiar form and countenance.

But Bonaparte did not like to have his portrait painted. The staring, watchful gaze of an artist was an annoyance to him; it made him restless and anxious, as if he feared that the scrutinizing look at his face might read the secrets of his soul. Yet at Josephine's tender and pressing request he had consented to its being taken by a young painter, Le Gros, whose distinguished talent had been brought to his notice.

Le Gros came therefore to Montebello, happy in the thought that he could immortalize himself through a successful portrait of the hero whom he honored with all the enthusiasm of a young heart. But he waited in vain three days for Bonaparte to give him a sitting. The general had not one instant to spare for the unfortunate young artist.

At last, at Josephine's pressing request, Bonaparte consented on the fourth day to sit for him one-quarter of an hour after breakfast. Le Gros came therefore delighted, at the time appointed, into the cabinet of Josephine, and had his easel ready, awaiting the moment when Bonaparte would sit in the arm-chair opposite. But, alas! the painter's hopes were not to be realized. The general could not bring himself to sit in that arm-chair, doing nothing but keeping his head quiet, so that the painter might copy his features. He had no sooner been seated, than he sprang up suddenly, and declared it was quite impossible to endure such martyrdom.

Le Gros dared not repeat his request, but with tears in his eyes gathered up his painting-materials. Josephine smiled. "I see very well," said she, "that I must have recourse to some extraordinary means to save for me and for posterity a portrait of the hero of Arcola."

She sat down in the arm-chair, and beckoned to Le Gros to have his easel in readiness. Then with a tender voice she called Napoleon to her, and opening both arms she drew him down on her lap, and in this way she induced him to sit down quietly a few moments and allow the painter the sight of his face, thus enabling him to sketch the portrait.*

At the end of this peculiar sitting, Bonaparte smilingly promised that he would next day grant the painter a second one, provided Josephine would again have the "extraordi-

* "Mémoires et Souvenirs du Comte Lavalette," vol. i., p. 168.

nary means" ready. She consented, and for four days in succession Le Gros was enabled to sit before him a quarter of an hour, and throw upon his canvas the features of the general, while he quietly sat on Josephine's lap.

This picture, which Le Gros thus painted, thanks to the sweet *ruse* of Josephine, and which was scattered throughout Europe in copperplate prints, represented Bonaparte, with uncovered head, holding a standard in his hand, and with his face turned toward his soldiers, calling on them to follow him as he dashed on the bridge of Arcola, amid a shower of Austrian balls.

It is a beautiful, imposing picture, and contemporaries praised it for its likeness to the hero, but no one could believe that this pale, grave countenance, these gloomy eyes, and earnest lips, which seemed incapable of a smile, were those of Bonaparte as he sat on the lap of his beloved Josephine when Le Gros was painting it.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PEACE OF CAMPO FORMIO.

After three months the time drew nigh when the peace negotiations were to reach a final conclusion, and when it was to be decided if the Emperor of Germany would make peace with the French republic or if he would renew the war.

For three months had the negotiations continued in Montebello—three months of feasts, pleasures, and receptions. To the official and public rejoicings had been also added domestic joys. Madame Letitia came to Italy to warm her happy, proud mother's heart at the triumphs of her darling son; and she brought with her her daughter Pauline, while

the youngest, Caroline, remained behind in Madame Campan's boarding-school. It could not be otherwise than that the sisters of the commander-in-chief, whose true beauty reminded one of the classic features of ancient Greece, should find among the officers of the army of Italy most enthusiastic admirers and worshippers, and that many should long for the favor of being more intimately connected by the ties of affection with the celebrated general.

Bonaparte left his sisters entirely free to make a choice among their suitors, and he hesitated not to give his consent when Pauline became affianced to General Leclerc. After a few weeks, the marriage was celebrated in Montebello; and, soon after, the happy couple left that city to return to Paris, whither Madame Letitia had preceded them.

Josephine, however, remained with her husband; she accompanied him from Montebello to Milan, where Bonaparte, now that the Austrian envoys had taken their leave, tarried some time, awaiting the final decision of the Austrian court upon his propositions. Meanwhile, the imperial court, for good reasons, still hesitated. It was known that in France there was secretly preparing an event which in a short time might bring on a new order of things, putting an end to the hateful republic, and once more placing the Bourbons on the throne of the lilies.

General Pichegru, a zealous royalist, and intimate friend of the Prince de Condé, with whom he had been in secret correspondence for several months, had organized a conspiracy which had for its object the downfall of the Directory, the ruin of the republican administration, the recall of the monarchy to Paris, and the re-establishment of the Bourbons.

But General Moreau, who, with his army on the Rhine, stood opposite to that of the royalists, had the good fortune to discover the conspiracy, by intercepting Pichegru's whole

correspondence. The Directory, informed by Moreau, took secretly precautionary measures, and on the 18th Fructidor, Pichegru, with all his real or supposed guilty companions, was arrested. To these guilty ones belonged also, according to the opinion of the Directory, two out of their number, Carnot and Barthélémy, besides twenty-two deputies and one hundred and twenty-eight others, all among the educated classes of society. These were exiled to Cayenne; Carnot alone escaped from this distant and cruel exile by a timely flight to Geneva.

The 18th Fructidor, which disarmed the royalists and destroyed their plans, had a great influence upon the negotiations carried on between France and Austria, which were entangled with so many difficulties. Austria, which had vacillated and delayed—for she was informed of the schemes of the royalists, and hoped that if Louis XVIII. should ascend the throne, she would be delivered from all the burdensome exactions of the republic—now saw that this abortive attempt had removed the royalists still further from their object and more firmly consolidated the republic; she was therefore inclined to push on negotiations more speedily, and to show greater readiness to bring on a final settlement.

The conferences broken off in Montebello were resumed in Udine. Thither came the Austrian and French plenipotentiaries. Bonaparte, however, felt that his presence was also necessary, so as not to allow these conferences again to remain in abeyance. He therefore, accompanied by Josephine, went to Passeriano, a beautiful residence of the Doge Marini, not far from Udine, charmingly situated on the shores of the Tagliamento, and in the midst of a splendid park. But the residence in Passeriano was not enlivened by the pleasures, recreations, and festivities of Montebello. Politics alone occupied Bonaparte's mind, and not only the peace negotiations, but also the Directory of the republic,

furnished him with too many occasions for ill-will and anger.

Austria, which had added the Count von Coblentz to her plenipotentiaries, adhered obstinately to her former claims; and the Directory, which now felt stronger and more secure by their victory of the 18th Fructidor, were so determined not to accept these claims, that they wrote to General Bonaparte that they would sooner resume hostilities than concede to "the overpowered, treacherous Austria, sworn into all the conspiracies of the royalists, her unreasonable pretensions."

But Bonaparte knew better than the proud lords of the Directory, that France needed peace as well as Austria; that France lacked gold, men, and ammunition, for the vigorous prosecution of the war. While, therefore, the Directory, enthroned in the Luxemburg, amid peace and luxury, desired a renewal of hostilities, it was the man of battles who desired peace, and who was inclined to make to Austria insignificant concessions sooner than see the work of peace dashed to pieces.

The sole recreation in Passeriano consisted in the banquets which were interchanged between it and Udine, and where Josephine found much pleasure, at least in the conversation of the Count von Coblentz, who could speak to her with spirit and grace of his sojourn in Petersburg—of Catharine the Great, at whose court he had been accredited so long as ambassador from Austria, and who had even granted him the privilege of being present at her private evening circles at the Hermitage.

Bonaparte was still busy with the glowing tenderness of a worshipping lover, in procuring for his Josephine pleasures and recreations, as each favorable opportunity presented itself.

The republic of Venice, now laboring under the greatest anxiety and fear on account of Bonaparte's anger at her

perfidy and enmity, had descended from the height of her proud attitude to the most abject humility. Her solicitude for mere existence made her so far forget her dignity, that she humbly invited Bonaparte, whose loud voice of anger pronounced only vengeance and destruction, to come and receive in person their homage and the assurance of their loyalty.

Bonaparte refused this invitation as regarded his own person, for in his secret thoughts the ruin of Venice was a settled matter; and as the death-warrant of this republic of terror and secret government was already signed in his thoughts, he could not accept her feasts and her homage. But he did not wish before the time to betray to the republic his own conclusions, and his refusal to accept their invitation ought not to have the appearance of a hostile demonstration. He therefore sent to Venice a representative, who, in his name, was to receive the humble homage and the assurances of friendship from the republic. This representative was Josephine, and she gladly undertook this mission, without foreseeing that Venice, which adorned itself for her sake with flowers and festivities, was but the crowned victim at the eve of the sacrifice.

As Bonaparte himself could not accompany his wife, he sent with her as an escort the ex-magistrate Marmont; and in his memoirs the latter relates with enthusiasm the feasts which the republic of Venice gave in honor of the general upon whom, as she well knew, her future fate depended.

"Madame Bonaparte," says he, "was four days in Venice. I accompanied her hither. Three days were devoted to the most splendid feasts. On the first day there was a regatta, a species of amusement which seems reserved only to Venice, the queen of the sea. . . . Six or seven gondolas, each manned by one or two oarsmen, perform a race which begins at St. Mark's Square, and ends at the Rialto bridge. These gondolas seem to fly; persons who have never seen

them can form no idea of their swiftness. The beauty of the representation consists especially in the immense gathings of the spectators. The Italians are extremely fond of this spectacle; they come from great distances on the continent to see it; there is not in Venice an individual who rushes not to the Canal Grande to enjoy the spectacle; and during the time of the regatta of which I am speaking, the wharves on the Canal Grande were covered with at least one hundred and fifty thousand persons, all full of curiosity. More than five hundred small and large barges, adorned with flowers, flags, and tapestries, followed the contesting gondolas.

"The second day we had a sea-excursion; a banquet had been prepared on the Lido; the population followed in barges adorned with wreaths and flowers, and to the sound of music re-echoing far and near.

"The third day, a night promenade took place. The palace of the doge, and the houses along the Canal Grande, were illuminated in the most brilliant manner, and gave light to hundreds of gondolas, which also were made luminous with divers-colored lamps. After a promenade of two hours, and a splendid display of fireworks in the midst of the waters, the ball opened in the palace of the doge. When we think of the means which the situation of Venice offers, the beauty of her architecture, the wonderful animation of the thousand gondolas closely pressed together, causing the impression of a city in motion; and when we think of the great exertions which such an occasion would naturally call forth, the brilliant imagination of this people so remarkable for its refined taste, and its burning lusts for pleasure—then we can form some idea of the wondrous spectacle presented by Venice in those days. It was no more the mighty Venice, it was the elegant, the luxurious Venice." *

* "Mémoires du Duc de Raguse," vol. i., p. 287.

After those days of festivities, Josephine, the queen of them, returned to the quietude of Passeriano, which, after the sunshine of Venice, must have appeared to her still more gloomy and sad.

But Bonaparte himself was weary of all this useless repose, and he resolved with a daring blow to cut into shreds those diplomatic knots of so many thousand interwoven threads.

The instrument with which he was to give the blow was not the sword—it was not that which Alexander had used, but it was a cup. This cup, at a *déjeuner* given to him by the Count von Coblentz, where was displayed the costly porcelain service presented to him by the Empress Catharine, was dashed at the feet of the Count von Coblentz by Bonaparte, who, with a thundering voice, exclaimed: "In fourteen days I will dash to pieces the Austrian monarchy as I now break this!"

The Count von Coblentz, infuriated at this, was still staring in bewilderment at the fragments of the imperial gift, when Bonaparte left the room, to enter his carriage. With a loud voice he called to one of the officers of his suite, and gave him orders to go at once to the camp of the Archduke Charles, and to tell him, in the name of General Bonaparte, that the peace negotiations were broken, and that hostilities would be resumed next day.

But as Bonaparte was going toward his carriage, he met the Marquis de Gallo, who besought him to re-enter the room; he assured him that it had been resolved to accept Bonaparte's ultimatum—that is to say, to renounce all claims to the fortress of Mantua.

On the next day* the treaty of peace between Austria and France was signed. It had been decided that the ceremony of signing it should take place in the village of Campo

*The 17th of October, 1797.

Formio, which for this reason was declared to be neutral ground. It lay midway between Udine and Passeriano; and Bonaparte sent his adjutant, Marmont, into the village to select a house where the ceremony might take place. But there was not a single building which was in any way fitted to receive such distinguished guests. The Austrian diplomats, therefore, consented to come to Passeriano to ratify the terms of peace, provided, it should be named after the neutral territory of Campo Formio.

The Count von Coblentz and the Marquis de Gallo passed the whole day at Passeriano, in the company of Bonaparte and Josephine. In Josephine's drawing-room each abandoned himself to the most cheerful and unaffected conversation, while at the same time the secretaries of both the Austrian and French embassies were in the cabinet of the French general, writing two copies of the mutual agreements of peace which were to be signed by Bonaparte and by the Austrian plenipotentiaries.

During the whole day Bonaparte was in high spirits. He had reached his aim: the strife was over; diplomatic bickerings were at rest; the small as well as the great war was ended; peace was gained at last! Bonaparte had, not only on the battle-field, but also at the green-table, been victorious; he had not only overcome Austria, but also the Directory. During the whole day he remained in the drawing-room with Josephine and his Austrian guests, and without any affectation he took his part in the conversation. It was so pleasant to him to be thus in confidential intercourse, that, as the evening came on, he would not allow lights to be brought into the drawing-room. As if they were in a sociable family circle, in some old remote castle, they amused themselves in relating ghost-stories, and here, too, Bonaparte won a victory. His story surpassed all others in horrors and thrilling fears, and the dramatic mode of its delivery increased its effect. Josephine became excited as

if by some living reality; and while Bonaparte, with an affrighted, trembling voice, was describing how the door opened, how the blood-stained ghost with hollow eyes entered, she screamed aloud, and tremblingly clung to his arm.

At this moment it was announced that the secretaries had prepared the documents of the treaty, and that nothing was wanting to make it operative but the signatures.

Bonaparte laughingly thanked his Josephine with a kiss for the flattering effect produced by his ghost-story, and then he hastened into his cabinet to attach his signature to the peace of Campo Formio.*

This peace gave to France the left bank of the Rhine, with the fortress of Mayence; it delivered Italy from the rule of Austria, but it repaid Austria by giving her possession of the beautiful city of the lagoons, Venice, which made Austria mistress of the Adriatic Sea.

Peace was concluded, and now Bonaparte, with his laurels and victories, could return to Paris; now he could hope that he had swept away, from the memory even of his adversaries, the sad success of the 13th Vendémiaire, by the series of brilliant victories and conquests which he had obtained in the name of their common country.

Bonaparte prepared himself therefore to return home to France. But the Emperor of Germany, full of admiration for the hero of Arcola, and of joy at a peace which had given him Venice, and which gave to France little more than the captured cannon, standards, and prisoners, but undying glory, wished to show himself thankful to Bonaparte. He offered to the general millions of treasure, and, still more, a magnificent estate, and promised him the title of duke.

But Bonaparte refused alike the money and the title.

* Lavalette, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 250.

As a simple French general he wished to return to France; and, though in future days he created at his will many dukes, he now disdained to become a duke by the grace of the Emperor of Germany. He accepted nothing out of all the offered presents, but six splendid gray horses which the Emperor Francis had sent him from his own stalls. Bonaparte had won too many victories, to need the title of a German duke; he had obtained a sufficiently ample share of the war-booty not to need the wealth and the treasures of sovereign gifts. He was no longer the poor general, of whom his enemies could say that he had married the widow of General de Beauharnais on account of her riches and of her influence; he now, besides fame, possessed a few millions of francs, which, as a small portion of his share of the victory's rewards, he brought home with him.

His work in Italy was accomplished; and in Milan, whither Bonaparte had returned with Josephine, they bade each other farewell: they wished to return to Paris by different routes.

Bonaparte desired first to go to Rastadt, there to attend the great peace congress of Germany and France. His journey thither was a complete triumph. He was everywhere received with enthusiasm; everywhere the people applauded the conqueror of so many battles, the hero who, only twenty-eight years old, had, by his series of victories, gained immortality. His reception in Berne, especially, was enthusiastic and flattering; both sides of his pathway were lined with brilliant equipages, and the beautiful, richly apparelled ladies who sat in them threw him kisses, crowns of flowers and bouquets, shouting, "Long live the peace-maker!"

He travelled over Mount Cenis to Rastadt, where he found in the crowd of German and French diplomats many generals and learned men, who had come there to see the man whom his very enemies admired, amongst whom he

was nearly as popular as with his friends. However, Bonaparte remained but a few days there; for, after having attended the opening of the Congress, he pursued his journey to Paris, where he arrived on the 6th of December.

Josephine, as we have already said, did not accompany her husband to Paris. Before leaving Italy, she desired to accomplish two objects of her heart. She wished to see Rome, the everlasting city of fame and of arts, the city of the ancient gods, and of the seat of St. Peter; and she wished also to embrace her son Eugene, who was there as an attaché of Joseph Bonaparte, the ambassador of the French republic. Wherever she went, she was received with enthusiasm, not only as the wife of Italy's deliverer, but also on account of her personal merits. Through her affability, her amiableness, and her sweet disposition, which shunned every haughty exaltation, and yet was never lacking in dignity or in reserve—through the goodness of her heart, which was ever ready to help the unfortunate—through all those exquisite and praiseworthy qualities which adorned and beautified her, she had won the love and admiration of all Italy; and long afterward, when the deliverer of Italy had become her lord and her oppressor, when she had no longer cause to love Bonaparte, but only to curse him, Italy preserved for Josephine a memory full of admiration and love.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DAYS OF TRIUMPH.

On the 5th of December, 1797, Bonaparte returned to Paris; and, a few days after, Josephine arrived also. In her little hotel, in the Street Chautereine, where she had passed so many bright and happy days, she hoped, after so

many storms and hardships, to enjoy again new and cheerful sunny days of domestic enjoyments—she hoped to rest from all those triumphs which had accompanied at each step both her and her husband.

This hope, however, was not to be realized, for greater triumphs still than those she had enjoyed in Italy awaited Bonaparte in Paris. The days of quietude, and the pleasures of home, which Josephine so much loved, and which she so well understood how to embellish with friendships and joys, were now forever past away. Placed at the side of a hero whose fame already filled all Europe, she could no longer calculate upon living in modest retirement, as she would have wished to do: it was her lot to share his burden of glory, as she also was illumined by its beams.

From this moment nothing of former days remained; all was changed, all was altered by Bonaparte's laurels and victories. He was no more the servant of the republic, he was nearly its master; he had not only defeated Austria in Italy, but he had also defeated in France the Directory, which had sent him as its general to Italy, and which now saw him return home as the master of the five monarchs of France.

Every thing now, as already said, assumed a new shape: even the house in which they lived, the street in which this house stood, had to be changed. Hitherto this street had been called "Rue Chautereine;" since Bonaparte's return the municipality of Paris gave it the name "Rue de la Victoire," and now to this Street of Victory the people of Paris streamed forth to see the conqueror; to stand there patiently for hours before the little hotel, and watch for the moment when at one of the windows the pale countenance of Bonaparte, with his long, smooth hair, might appear.

Even the little hotel was to be altered. Bonaparte—who, in earlier days, had described, as his dream of happiness, the possession of a house, of a *cabriolet*, and to have at

his table the company of a few friends, with his Josephine —now found that the little house in the Rue de la Victoire was too small for him; that it must be altered even as the street had been. The modest and tasteful arrangements which had sufficed the Widow Josephine de Beauharnais, appeared now to her young husband as insufficient; the little saloon, in which at one time he had felt so happy at the side of the viscountess, was no longer suited to his actual wants. Large reception-rooms and vestibules were needed, magnificent furniture was necessary, for the residence of the conqueror of Italy, in the Rue de la Victoire.

Architects were engaged to enlarge and transform the small house into a large hotel, and it was left to Josephine's taste to convert the hitherto elegant private dwelling into a magnificent residence for the renowned general who had to be daily in readiness to receive official visits, delegations of welcome from the authorities, and the institutions of Paris, and from the other cities of France.

For France was desirous to pay her homage to the hero of Arcola, and to celebrate his genius—to wish him prosperity, and to applaud him. The Directory had to adapt themselves to the universal sentiment; to pay their respects to the general with a cheerful mien and with friendly alacrity, while at heart they looked on him with vexation and envy. Bonaparte's popularity filled them with anxiety and fearful misgivings.

But it was necessary to submit to this; the public sentiment required those festivities in honor of the general of the republic, and the five directors in the Luxemburg had no longer the power to guillotine the public sentiment, the true king of Paris, as once they had guillotined King Louis.

The directors, therefore, inaugurated brilliant festivities; they received the conqueror of Italy in the Luxemburg with great demonstrations of solemnity, in which the Parisians took a part. In the immense court in front of the resi-

dence of the directors this celebration took place. In the midst of the open place a lofty platform was erected; it was the country's altar, on which the gigantic statues of Freedom, Equality, and of Peace, were lifted up. Around this altar was a second platform, with seats for the five hundred, the deputies, and the authorities; the standards conquered in the Italian war formed over the seats of the five directors a sort of canopy: they were, however, to them as the sword of Damocles, ready to fall upon them at any moment and destroy them.

The directors, dressed in brilliant antique robes, created no impression, notwithstanding their theatrical splendor, in comparison with the sensation produced by the simple, unaffected appearance of General Bonaparte. He wore the plain green uniform which he had worn at Arcola and Lodi; his suite was limited to a few officers only, who, like himself, appeared in their ordinary uniforms, which they had worn on the battle-field. The two generals, Andreossy and Joubert, carried the standards which the Legislative Assembly, two years before, had presented to the army of Italy, and upon which could now be read the names of sixty-seven battles won.

At one of the windows of the palace of the Luxemburg, Josephine watched this strange celebration, the splendors of which made her heart beat with delight, and filled her eyes with tears of joy. Near her was her daughter Hortense, lately withdrawn from Madame Campan's institution, to be with her mother, who, full of ecstasy and pride, gazed at the charming maiden at her side, just blooming into a young lady; and then beyond, at that pale young man with pensive eyes standing near yonder altar, and before whom all the authorities of Paris bowed—who was her husband, her Bonaparte, everywhere conqueror! Before her only was he the conquered! She listened with a happy smile to the long speech with which Talleyrand saluted Bonaparte in

the name of his country; she heard how Barras, concealing within himself his jealousy and his envy, welcomed him; how with admiration he praised him; how he said that Nature, in one of her most exalted and greatest moments, had resolved to produce a masterpiece, and had given to the wondering world Bonaparte!

And then, after this affected harangue, Josephine saw how Barras, with tears of emotion, embraced Bonaparte, and how the other Directors of France followed his example. A slight sarcastic smile for a moment played on Josephine's lips, for she well knew how little this friendship and this love of the Directory were to be trusted, how little sincerity was contained in the sentiments which they so publicly manifested toward the conqueror.

With love's anxiety and a woman's instinct, she watched over her hero; she was ever busy to track out the meandering paths of his foes, to destroy the nets wherein they wished to entangle his feet. She had even braved the jealous wrath of Bonaparte when it was necessary to ferret out some intrigue of the Directory. The special spy, whom Barras had sent to Italy to watch the movements of Bonaparte, and to give him early reports of every word, Botot, had been received by Josephine with a friendly smile and with great attention; she manifested toward him a confiding friendship, and thus succeeded in discovering his secret, and behind the seeming friend to unveil the cunning spy of Bonaparte's enemies. She could therefore meet Bonaparte's anger with serene brow and pure conscience; and when he accused her of frivolity and unfaithfulness, she justified herself before him by unveiling the secret schemes and machinations of his foes. And these foes were chiefly the five directors. He therefore knew very well what he was to expect from the embraces, the tears, the kisses of Barras; and the flattering words which he spoke to him in the presence of the Parisians made no impression whatever on Bonaparte's heart.

But the applause with which the people of Paris received him was not deceitful, like that of the Directory; the respect they paid him was not forced, and their applause therefore filled the hearts of Josephine and Bonaparte with joy. Wherever he appeared, he was greeted with loud demonstrations of joy; the poets praised him in their songs, the musicians sang hymns in his honor, and the men of science brought to him proofs of their esteem. The Institute of Sciences named him one of their members in the place of Carnot; the painters and architects paid him homage with their works. The renowned painter David requested the honor of taking Bonaparte's portrait, and the general acceded to his wishes because Josephine had promised that the painter's request should be granted. David desired to paint him on horseback near the bridge of Lodi or of Arcola, and he placed before him a sketch he had made for this picture. But Bonaparte rejected it.

"No," said he, "I was not there alone, I conquered only with the whole army. Place me there, quiet and calm, seated upon a fiery horse."

What did Bonaparte mean by this "fiery horse"? Are his words to be understood in all their beauty and simplicity? or did he, by the restless horse, which he so calmly reins in, already think of the republic which, under the guidance of his masterly hand, was one day to be converted into an empire? Who could read the depths of this man's heart, which screened itself so carefully, and whose secrets in regard to the future he dared not divulge even to his beloved Josephine?

The first few weeks after their return from Italy were passed away amid festivities and demonstrations of respect. Josephine abandoned herself to this pomp with a high spirit, and with a deep love for enjoyment. Her whole being was thoroughly interpenetrated with the warmth of this new sun, which had risen over her in so wondrous a light,

and surrounded her with its lustrous rays. All these festivities, banquets, representations at the grand opera, and at the *Théâtre Français*, these public ovations which accompanied Bonaparte at every step, at every promenade, at every attendance at the theatre,—all these marks of honor elated Josephine, filling her with an enthusiastic pride for the hero, the man whom she now loved with all the excitability of a woman's heart, and over whom fame rested as a halo, and which made him appear to Josephine still greater and more exalted. To him alone now belonged her whole heart and being; and now for the first time she experienced those nervous spasms of jealousy which at a later date were to mix so many bitter drops of gall in the golden cup of her greatness.

At the ovations, the tokens of affection on the part of gentlemen delighted her, but she had no thanks for the ladies when, with their enthusiasm, brilliant eyes, bewitching smiles, and flattering words, they endeavored to manifest their adoration and gratitude to the hero of Italy; she could barely keep back her tears when, at the reception which Talleyrand, the minister of foreign affairs, gave to Bonaparte, the beautiful songstress Grassini appeared, and, with her entrancing voice, sang the fame of the conqueror who had bound captive to his triumphal car, as the most precious booty, the proud songstress herself.

The Directory, however, would have gladly allowed the ladies to take part in this enthusiasm if the men had taken no share in it; but the admiration which they had everywhere manifested so strongly for Bonaparte, had completely overshadowed their own greatness and importance. They were no longer the monarchs of France—Bonaparte alone seemed to be its ruler—and their envious jealousy told them that it would require but a sign from his hand to impart to the French government a new form, to disenthrone the five directors, and to place himself in their position. The sole

aim was, therefore, to remove Bonaparte as soon as practicable from Paris, and if possible from France, so as to check his popularity, and to oppose his ever-growing power.

Bonaparte was but little inclined to meet these views of the Directory, and to accept the propositions made to him. He declined at once to go to Rastadt, there to attend to the discussions of the congress, with as much resolution as he had refused to go to Rome to punish the papal government for the enmity it had shown to France. He left it to diplomats to prattle in Rastadt over the green-table, and to General Berthier to punish the papal government, and to drive Pius out of the Eternal City, the seat of St. Peter, and erect there the altar of the republic of Rome.

There were greater and loftier aims which Bonaparte now sought—and fame, which he loved quite as much as Josephine did, and was soon to love even more, was enticing him on to paths yet untrodden, where no hero of past ages had sought for it.

In Egypt, near the pyramids of four thousand years, he desired to gather fresh laurels; from thence the astonished world was to hear the wondrous recitals of his victories. His lively fancy already imagined his name written on those gigantic monuments of past ages, the only earthly creations which have in themselves nearly the character of immortality. With his mighty deeds he wished to surpass all the heroes of modern times; he desired to rival Cæsar and Alexander.

Cæsar had won fifty battles, Bonaparte wanted to win a hundred. Alexander had gone from Macedonia to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, Bonaparte wished to leave Paris to obtain victories at the cataracts of the Nile.

The bitterness which existed between the Directory and Bonaparte was increasing more and more. He no longer spoke to the five monarchs as an obedient, submissive son of the republic; he spoke as their lord and master; he

threatened when his will was not obeyed; he was wroth when he met with opposition. And the Directory had not the courage to reproach him for his undutiful conduct, or to enter the lists with him to dispute for the sovereignty, for they well knew that public sentiment would declare itself in his favor, that Paris would side with the general if matters were to come to a crisis between them. It was therefore better and wiser to avoid this strife, and, under some good pretext, remove Bonaparte and open to him some distant pathway to fame, so as to be rid of him.

Egypt was far enough from Paris to give to the Directory guaranties of security, and it fell in with Bonaparte's plans. It was resolved therefore to send an expedition to Egypt, and he was appointed its commander-in-chief.

Bonaparte had directed his eyes to the East when in Passeriano he was making peace with Austria. In Egypt were the battle-fields which were to surround his name with a fresh halo of glory.

Josephine learned this resolution of Bonaparte with fear and anxiety, but she dared not betray this to any one, since this expedition was to remain a secret to all the world. Only in private could her tears flow, only before Bonaparte could she complain. Once, as she encircled him convulsively with her arms, her mind full of misgivings and her eyes of tears she asked him how many years he thought of remaining in Egypt.

She had put this question only in a jesting form. He took it in full earnestness, and answered:

"Either a few months or six years. All depends upon circumstances. I must win Egypt to civilization. I will gather there artists, learned men, mechanics of all trades, even women—dancers, songstresses, and actresses. I want to mould Egypt into a second France. One can do a great deal in six years. I am now twenty-nine years old, I

shall be thirty-five when I return—that is not old. But I shall want more than six years if I go to India." *

Josephine cried aloud with anguish and horror, and, embracing him in her arms, implored him with all the delicate tenderness of her anxious affection not to thrust her aside, but to allow her to accompany him to Egypt.

But Bonaparte refused, and this time her tears, which he had never before denied, were fruitless. He felt that Josephine's presence would damp his ardent courage, retard his onward march, and that he would not have the necessary fearless energy to incur risks and perils if Josephine were to be threatened by their consequences. He could not expose her to the privations and restless wanderings of a campaign, and his burning love for her was too real for him to yield to her wishes.

Josephine, meanwhile, was not silenced by his refusal; she persevered in her supplications, and Bonaparte, at last softened by her prayers, was obliged to come to terms. It was decided that Josephine should follow him to Egypt, that he would select a place of residence and prepare every thing for her reception there, so that she might without danger or too much inconvenience undertake the journey.

But before commencing such an undertaking, Josephine's health needed recruiting; she was to go to the baths of Plombières, and Bonaparte was to hold a ship in readiness in Toulon to bring her to Egypt.

The ship which was chosen to transport her was the Pomona, the same in which, when only sixteen years old, she had come from Martinique to France. Then she had gone forth to an unknown world and to an unknown husband; now she was on the same ship to undertake a journey to an unknown world, but it was a beloved husband whom she was going to meet, and love gave her the strength to do so.

* Bourrienne, vol. ii., p. 49.

Josephine, full of the sweetest confidence that she was soon to follow Bonaparte, and hereafter to see him again, accompanied him to Toulon. She had the strength to repress her tears as she bade him farewell, and to smile as he entreated her to keep her heart faithful to him.

She showed herself at this separation stronger than Bonaparte himself, for while her eyes were bright with joyous love, his were sad and obscured by tears.

The difference was this: Bonaparte knew that he was bidding farewell to Josephine for long years; she trusted that in a few months she would be reunited to him.

Bonaparte imprinted a last kiss on the lips of Josephine. She embraced him tenderly in her arms, and, to shield herself against the deep anguish of the separation, she cried aloud:

"In three months we meet again! The Pomona, which brought me to France, will bear me back to my hero, to my Achilles! In three months I shall be with you again. You have often called me the star of your fortune. How could this star abandon you when you are going to fight against your foes?"

He gazed at her with a look at once full of deep love and sorrow:

"Josephine," said he, solemnly, "my enemies are neither in Asia nor in Africa, but they are all in France. I leave you behind me in their midst, for you to watch them, and to unravel their schemes. Think of this, and be my strong and prudent wife." *

Deeply moved, he turned away, and hastened from her to the boat that was to bear him to the flag-ship, which was waiting only for the commanding general to come aboard before weighing anchor.

* Bonaparte's words.—See Le Normand, vol. i., p. 278.

BOOK III.

THE EMPRESS AND THE DIVORCED.

CHAPTER XXX.

PLOMBIÈRES AND MALMAISON.

WHILE Bonaparte with the French fleet was sailing toward the East, there, in the wide valley of the Nile, to win a new fame, Josephine started for Plombières, where she had requested her daughter Hortense to meet her. The splendid scenery and pleasant quietude of Plombières offered at least some comfort and satisfaction to Josephine, whose heart was not yet healed from the anguish of separation. Her greatest consolation was the thought that in a few months she would go to her husband; that the Pomona would bear her to him who now possessed her whole soul, and surrounded her whole being with an enchantment which was to cease only with her life.

She counted the days, the weeks, which separated her from the wished-for journey; she waited with impatient longing for the news that the Pomona, which needed a few repairs, was ready and all prepared for the distant but welcome voyage.

Her sole recreation consisted in the company of, and in the cordial fellowship with Hortense, now grown up a young lady, and the companionship of a few intimate ladies who had followed her to Plombières. Surrounded by these, she either sat in her drawing-room, busy with some manual labor, or else, followed by a single servant, she and Hortense

made long walks in the wonderfully romantic vicinity of Plombières.

One morning she was in the drawing-room with her friends, working with the needle, conversing, and finding recreation in stepping through the wide-open folding-doors upon the balcony, from which a most enchanting view could be had of the lovely valley, and the mountains which stood round about it. While there, busily embroidering a rose, one of her friends, who had gone to the balcony, called her to come quickly to admire a remarkably small greyhound which was passing down the street. Josephine, whose love for dogs had made Napoleon pass many a restless hour, hastened to obey her friend's call, and went out upon the balcony, whither the rest of the ladies followed her, all curious to see the greyhound which had set Madame de Cambis into such an excitement. But the weight of these six ladies, gathered close together on the balcony, was too heavy for the plank and joist-work loosely put together. A fearful crash was heard; and as Hortense, who had remained in the drawing-room, busy with her painting, looked out, she saw neither the ladies nor the balcony. All had disappeared—nothing but a cloud of dust arose from the street, amidst a confusion of cries of distress, of shouts for help, and groans of pain.

The balcony, with the ladies, had been precipitated into the street, and all those who were on it were more or less severely injured. Josephine recognized it as a providential protection that she had not paid with broken limbs, like her friends, for the curiosity of seeing the beautiful little greyhound, but had only received violent contusions and sprained joints. For weeks she had to suffer from the consequences of this fall, and was confined to her bed, not being able to lift herself up, nor with her bruised, swollen hands to bring the food to her mouth during this time. Hortense had to wait upon her mother as she

had waited upon her when she was only a small, helpless child.

While Josephine was thus for these weeks suffering, the Pomona, fully equipped, was sent to sea, for she was intrusted with important instructions for the commanding general Bonaparte, and could not possibly be detained for Josephine's recovery. She received this news with bitter tears, and resolutely declared that no sooner should she be recovered than she would sail for Egypt in any kind of vessel; that she was firmly decided to follow her husband and share his dangers.

She had, however, twice received letters from Bonaparte. In the first of these he had, full of tender solicitude, entreated her not to undertake the fatiguing and dangerous voyage; in the second he had commanded her with all the earnestness of love to give up the enterprise, and requested as a proof of her affection and faithfulness, that she would listen to reason, remain in Paris, and watch over his interests, and be his guardian angel.

Josephine read this last letter with a sorrowful smile, and, as she handed it to her friend Madame de Chateau-Renaud, she said, sighing:

"The days of happiness are over. While in Italy, Bonaparte required that I should bid defiance to all dangers, so as to be at his side, for his letters then demanded my presence. Now he orders me to avoid dangers, and to remain quietly at home."

"But it is out of pure love he does this!" exclaimed her friend. "See how affectionate and how tender his letter is! Certainly no man can love his wife more warmly than Bonaparte loves you."

"Oh, yes," sighed Josephine, "he loves me yet, but I am no longer absolutely necessary—he can live without me; once love ruled over his reason, now his reason rules over his love. It will be as I fear: I shall day by day love him

more fondly and more passionately, for he is my last love, but he will every day love me less, for perhaps I am his first love, and his heart will be young long after he reads upon my face that I am six years older than he."

However, she conformed to the wishes of her husband; she was resigned, and gave up the thought of going to Egypt. At first she did it only with tears, but soon after there came news which made her accept her husband's wishes as the commands of Fate.

The Pomona, the vessel which had once brought her from Martinique to France, and on board of which she was to go to Egypt, had been captured by an English man-of-war, and all her passengers sent as prisoners to England.

The fall from the balcony had therefore saved Josephine from being carried into captivity to England. To this fall she owed her liberty! With all the levity and superstition of a creole, Josephine looked upon this fortunate mishap as a warning from Fate, and it seemed to her as if this had taken place to hinder her journey to Egypt. She therefore dried her tears and submitted to the orders alike of Fate and of her husband.

She remained in France, and accepted her mission to watch, as a true friend and beloved one, over the interests of her husband, to observe his friends and foes, and to send him news of every thing which it was important for him to know.

Once her fate decided, and she resolved to remain in France, she determined to make her life comfortable and pleasant; she wished to prepare for herself and her children a joyous existence, and procure also for her returning husband a gift which she knew would meet a long-cherished wish of his.

She bought a residence, situated not far from Paris, the Castle Malmaison, if the name of castle can be properly given to a pretty, tastefully-built country residence, tolerably large and plain, but surrounded by a beautiful park.

Their wishes and wants were yet simple, and the country residence, Malmaison, was amply sufficient to receive the family and the friends of General Bonaparte and his wife; it became too small and too narrow only when it had to accommodate the Emperor Napoleon, the empress, and their court-attendants and suite.

But if the Castle Malmaison was not large, the park which surrounded it was all the larger and handsomer, and, with its shady walks, its wondrous beds of flowers, its majestic avenues, its splendid groves and lawns, it had for Josephine pleasures and joys ever new and fresh; and it furnished her, moreover, with the welcome opportunity of following the inclinations of her youth amidst the flowers, birds, trees, and plants.

Josephine loved botany; it was natural that she should endeavor to collect together in Malmaison the most beautiful plants and flowers, and to arrange them in this her little earthly paradise. She enlisted the most able architects and the most skilful gardeners, and, under their direction, with the hands of hundreds of workmen, there soon arose one of the most beautiful hot-houses, wherein all these glories of earth, splendid flowers, and fruits of distant climes, would find a home!

Josephine herself, with her fine taste and her deep knowledge of botany, directed all these arrangements and improvements; the builders as well as the gardeners had to submit their plans for her approbation, and it was not seldom that her keen, practised eye discovered in them defects which her ingenuity at once found means to correct.

In Malmaison, Josephine created around her a new world, a quiet paradise of happiness, where she could dream, with blissful cheerfulness and with all the youthful energy of her heart, of a peaceful future, of delightful contentment, in the quiet enjoyment of Nature and of home.

But the old world outside did not cease its own march;

it fought its battles, spun its intrigues, and continued its hostilities. Josephine could not withdraw herself from this old world; she dared not place the paradise of Malmaison as a wall of partition between her and the wild stir and tumult of Paris; she had to rush away from the world of innocence, from this country-life, into the whirlpool of the agitated, restless life of Paris.

Bonaparte had made it a duty for her to watch his friends as well as his foes, and there were then happening in Paris events which appeared to the wife of General Bonaparte worthy of close observation. His long absence had diminished the number of his friends, and at the same time gave strength to and increased his enemies, who were ever busy to defame and vilify his heroic deeds, and to turn them into a crime; they represented that the expedition to Egypt, notwithstanding the glorious exploits of the French army, should have had more striking results, and the louder they cried out, the more feeble and timid were the voices of his friends. The latter daily found their position becoming more precarious, for they were the moderate republicans, the supporters of the actual order of things, and of the constitution which France had adopted. Against this constitution arose, with loud cries, two hostile parties, which increased every day, and assumed toward it a more and more threatening attitude.

These parties were, on the one hand, the royalists, who saw their hopes increase every day, because the armies of the European powers, allied against France, were approaching nearer and nearer the French frontiers; and, on the other, the republicans of the past, who hoped to re-establish the old days of the Convention and of the red republic.

Both parties tried to undermine society and the existing authorities; they organized conspiracies, seditions, and tumults, and were constantly inventing new intrigues, so as to destroy the government, and set themselves up in its place.

The royalists trusted to the combined powers of the princes of Europe, with whom the exiled Bourbons were approaching; and in La Vendée the guerilla warfare had already begun against the republic.

The red republicans dreamed of re-establishing the guillotine, which was to restore France to health by delivering her from all the adversaries of the republic and bring back the glorious days of 1793; they left nothing untried to excite the people into dissatisfaction and open rebellion.

Against both parties stood the Directory, who in these days of tumult and sedition, were themselves feeble and without energy, seeking only to prolong their existence. They were satisfied to live on day by day, and shrank from every decided action which might increase the wrath of the parties or destroy the brilliant present of the mighty directors, in whose ears the title of "the five monarchs" sounded so sweetly.

In the interior of France, anarchy, with all its horrors and confusion, prevailed, and, on the frontier, its enemies were taking advantage of this anarchy to give to the republic its mortal stroke.

Turkey, Russia, the Kings of Sardinia, Naples, and Sweden, were allied with Austria, England, and Prussia, and they had begun to make immense preparations. A Russian army, led by Suwarrow, was marching toward Italy, to the help of Austria—to reconquer Lombardy. The Rastadt congress, from which a universal peace had been expected, had dissolved, and the only result was an increased enmity between Germany and France, the deputies of the latter, as they were returning home, being shamefully murdered in the open street, immediately before the gates of Rastadt, at the instigation of the Austrian Count Lehrbach.

The murder of these ambassadors became the signal for the renewal of war, which was now to be prosecuted with increased bitterness.

At this important, critical moment, when all Europe was buckling on its armor against France, which so much needed the guidance of her victorious general—at this moment, Bonaparte was not only away from Paris, but no news had been received from him for some months. Only a vague rumor was spread through Paris: "Bonaparte had fallen at the desperate attack on Acre," and this sufficed to discourage entirely his friends, and to make his enemies still more audacious and overbearing.

At first Josephine was entirely cast down by the terrible news; but afterward came the reflection, the doubt, the hope, that all this might be a rumor spread by his enemies. She hastened to Paris to obtain information from the Directory, so as to find out if there were any foundation for the report of Bonaparte's death. But the Directory had as uncertain news as Josephine herself, and the absence of information seemed to confirm its truth.

As she came one day to Barras to ask him if there were any news from the army, she heard him say to Rewbell, one of the five directors: "Here comes the wife of that hypocrite Bonaparte! If he is not dead to Europe, he is at least dead to France."

This expression proved to her that Barras himself did not believe in his death, and gave to Josephine all her energy and presence of mind. She busied herself in endeavoring to find a clew to this horrible rumor; and she found that Bonaparte's enemies had spread it, and that only those to whom his death would be welcome, and his return be objectionable, had circulated this report.

Her heart again beat with hope; she now felt, in the blissful joy which penetrated her whole being, that Bonaparte was not dead; that he lived still; that he would return home, to her great delight and to the terror of his foes. A cheerful assurance sustained her whole nature. While all those, who in the days of her happiness had rivalled each

other in assuring her of their friendship and devotedness, the Directory, the ministers, the majority of the generals, turned away from her, cold and indifferent; and her few true friends, low-spirited and depressed, bowed their heads, while her foes and those of Bonaparte scornfully said in their joy, "Now the new King of Jerusalem and Cyprus has fallen under the blows of a new savage Omar." While every thing was against her, Josephine alone was cheerful, and confidingly looked into the future, for she felt and knew that the future would soon bring back her husband, her beloved.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE FIRST FAITHLESSNESS.

JOSEPHINE'S prophetic heart had not deceived her. Bonaparte lived! But his was a life of danger, of constantly renewed battles and hardships—a life in which he had constantly to guard against not only enemies, but also against sickness.

Bonaparte had traversed the deserts with his army, visited the pyramids, conquered Cairo, and, in warmly-contested and fearful combats, had defeated and subdued the Mussulman. But these numerous victories had been followed by some defeats, and all his successes were more than counterbalanced by the fruitless storming of the impregnable Acre, and the failure to conquer Syria. The English admiral, Sidney Smith, with his vessels, anchored in the harbor of Acre, protected the besieged, and constantly provided them with provisions and ammunition, and so efficiently supported the pacha and his mercenary European soldiers, that Bonaparte, after two months of fruitless efforts, abandoned the siege, on the 10th of May, 1799, and retreated into Egypt.

This is not, however, the place to recall the stupendous enterprises of Bonaparte, which remind one of the deeds of the heroes and demi-gods of ancient Greece, or the nursery tales of extraordinary beings.

His heroic deeds are engraven on history's page: there can be read the wondrous events of his Egyptian campaign, of his march through the wilderness, of the capture of Cairo, of his successful battles of Aboukir and Tabor, which led the heroic General Kleber, forgetting all rivalry, to embrace Bonaparte, exclaiming: "General Bonaparte, you are as great as the world, but the world is too small for you!"

There, also, one can read of the cruel massacre of three thousand captive Mussulmen, of the revolt of Cairo; there are depicted the blood-stained laurels which Bonaparte won in this expedition, the original plan of which seems to have been conceived in the brain of one who was at once a demi-god and an adventurer.

We leave, therefore, to history the exclusive privilege of narrating Bonaparte's career as a warrior; our task is with something superior—with his thoughts, feelings, and sufferings, in the days of his Egyptian campaign. It is not with the soldier, the captain, or his plans of battle, that we have to do, but with the man, and especially with the husband of Josephine—the woman who for his sake suffered, was full of solicitude, contended for him, and struggled with love and loyalty, while he fought only with sword and cannon.

It is true, Bonaparte also had to suffer, and his anxieties for the success of his plans did not alone hang heavily on his heart, while with his army he besieged the impregnable Acre. At this very time his heart received a deep wound from his friend and confidant Junot, who drove the sting of jealousy into his sensitive heart. It is the privilege of friendship to pass by in silence nothing which calumny or ill-will may imagine or circulate, but truly to make known to our

friend every thing which the public says of him, without regard to the sufferings which such communications may entail upon his heart. Junot made full use of this privilege. Bourrienne in his memoirs relates as follows:

"While we were in the vicinity of the springs of Messoudiah, I saw one day Bonaparte, with his friend Junot, pacing to and fro, as he often did. I was not very far from them, and I know not why during this conversation my eyes were fixed on him. The face of the general was paler than usual, though I knew not the cause. There was a strange nervousness; his eyes seemed bewildered, and he often struck his head with his hand.

"After a quarter of an hour, he left Junot and came toward me. I had noticed his angry, thoughtful expression. I went to meet him, and as I stood before him, Bonaparte, with a harsh and severe tone, exclaimed: 'You have no affection for me. The women! . . . Josephine! . . . Had you any affection for me, you would long ago have given me the information which Junot has now told me: he is a true friend! Josephine! . . . and I am six hundred miles away! . . . You ought to have told me! . . . Josephine! . . . so to deceive me! . . . You! . . . Woe to you all! I will uproot that detestable race of seducers and *blondins!* As regards her—separation!—yes: divorce, public separation before the eyes of all! . . . I must write! I know every thing! . . . It is her fault, Bourrienne! You ought to have told me.'

"These vehement, broken utterances, the strange expression on his face, and his excited tone of voice, revealed only too clearly what had been the subject of the conversation he had had with Junot. I saw that Junot had been drawn into a fatal indiscretion, and that if he had really believed that charges could be made against Madame Bonaparte, he had exaggerated them in an unpardonable manner. My situation was one of extreme delicacy: I had, however,

the good fortune to remain cool, and as soon as his first excitement had subsided, I began to tell him that I knew nothing about what Junot had told him; that if even such rumors, which often were circulated only by slander, had reached me, and if I had thought it my duty to communicate them to him, I should certainly not have chosen the moment when he was six hundred miles away from France to do so. I did not hesitate to tell him how blameworthy Junot's conduct appeared to me, and how ungenerous it was to accuse a woman thoughtlessly, when she was not present to justify or to defend herself; I told him that it was no proof of affection for Junot to add domestic troubles to the grave anxieties which already overburdened him. Notwithstanding my observations, to which, however, he listened with composure, the word 'separation' fell often from his lips, and one must understand to what a pitch the excitement of his feelings could carry him, to be able to imagine how Bonaparte appeared during this painful scene. I did not, however, give up the point; I came back to what I had said. I reminded him with what carelessness men received and circulated such reckless stories, suited only to the idle curiosity of gossips, and unworthy the attention of strong minds. I spoke to him of his fame: 'My fame?' cried he, 'ah, I know not what I would give if what Junot has told me is not true—so much do I love this woman . . . if Josephine is guilty, I must be divorced from her forever. . . . I will not be the ridicule of the idle babblers of Paris! I must write to Joseph to procure this separation.'

"Though he was still much excited, yet he was somewhat more quiet. I took advantage of a moment's pause to combat this idea of separation which seemed to overrule him. I called his attention to the unreasonableness it would be, on such vague and probably false rumors, to write to his brother. 'If you send a letter,' said I, 'it will bear the impress of the excitement which has dictated it;

as regards a separation, it will be time, after mature consideration, to speak of it.'

"These last words made an impression on him which I had not expected so soon to see; he became perfectly calm, and listened to me as if he felt the need of receiving words of encouragement, and after this conversation he never again alluded to the subject. Fourteen days after, before Acre, he manifested to me the most violent displeasure against Junot, complained of the sufferings which such indiscreet revelations had caused him, and which he now considered as purely an invention of malice. I afterward noticed that he did not forgive Junot this stupidity. It is easy to understand why Josephine, when she learned from Napoleon this conduct of Junot, never could feel for him a very warm interest, or intercede in his favor." *

It will be seen that the very sensitive heart of Bonaparte had again been kindled into jealousy, as it so often had happened before in Italy. Absence—a momentary separation—was enough to enkindle these flames. We have seen in the letters which Bonaparte wrote to Josephine during the Italian campaign, how her silence—the least delay in her answering his letters—was enough for him to incriminate her, on account of his jealous affections; how, because she does not constantly write, he threatens to rush in some night unexpectedly, and with the rage of jealousy force the doors open, and murder "the young lover of eighteen, and curse Josephine because he must love her without bounds."

Now he swears to root out this detestable race of seducers and *blondins* who have beguiled from him the heart of his Josephine. Full of passion and jealousy, he believes in the calumnies which Junot, with all the cruel inconsiderateness of a trusty friend, has whispered to him, and at once Josephine is guilty! She has had a love-correspondence with

* Bourrienne, "Mémoires," vol. ii., p. 212.

Charles Botot, the blond private secretary of Barras, for Charles Botot comes sometimes to Malmaison, and has often been seen near Josephine and her daughter Hortense in her *loge!* But by degrees comes reflection, and a fortnight after he believes that malice alone can have invented these calumnies. This noble conviction, however, was soon to be shaken by the enemy, for Josephine had enemies quite near Bonaparte, who longed to draw away from her a husband's heart and to drive him into a divorce.

First of all there were the whole family of Bonaparte, who had seen with unwillingness Napoleon's marriage, for he was thereby much less under their influence, and they had wished that he would at all events have married Desirée Clary, the sister of Joseph's wife, and thus have been more closely united to the family.

But, while he was in Egypt, another powerful enemy had been added to these. This was a young and beautiful woman, Madame Fourès, the beloved of the ardent general.

While Bonaparte, with all the madness of jealousy at a mere groundless calumny, which had come across the sea distorted and magnified, wished to be divorced from Josephine; while he complained of woman's faithlessness, frivolity, and inconstancy; while he cursed all women as coquettes, he himself was guilty of faithlessness. Forgetting his vows and his protestations of love for his wife, he had abandoned himself to a new affection without any regard to public opinion, and even made no secret of his intrigues.

Unfortunate Josephine! The fears she had anticipated and dreaded before accepting Bonaparte's proffered hand were too soon to be realized. His heart began to grow cold while her love increased every day with deeper intensity; he had perchance already read in her amiable countenance the first signs of age, and he thought it might well be allowed to the young general not to maintain so strict a fealty to that faithfulness which he claimed from her.

But Bonaparte still loved Josephine, although he was unfaithful to her. Surely this new love might well bear the guilt of the credulousness with which he judged Josephine, and the word of separation might thus easily come upon his lips, because the newly-loved one, amid the vows of her affection, might have whispered it in his ear.

Madame Fourès had an immense advantage over Josephine; she was barely twenty years old, was bewitchingly beautiful, was a coquette, and—she was there in Bonaparte's immediate presence, while the Mediterranean separated him from Josephine.

Bonaparte abandoned himself to this new love with all his passionate nature. Not only did the whole army in Egypt know this, but his foes also became acquainted with it; and Sir Sidney Smith made use of this fact to attack his enemy in a way little known to the annals of warfare. Bonaparte had removed from the Egyptian army Madame Fourès' injured husband, who held there the rank of a cavalry officer, by sending him with a message to the Directory. But the vessel in which he had sailed for France was captured by the English, and Admiral Sidney Smith undertook, with all the careless, open manner of an Englishman, to make him fully acquainted with the relations existing between his wife and General Bonaparte.

He then gave to M. Fourès, who was beside himself with anger and wrath, and who threatened bloody vengeance, his freedom, and exhibited his good-will toward him so far as to have him landed near Cairo, where Bonaparte then was with his beautiful mistress.

Enraged with jealousy, M. Fourès rushed to his wife, to make to her the most violent demonstrations. Perhaps too weak to part with an adored, beautiful wife, he simply ordered her to return with him to France.

But Madame Fourès made resistance. She called her mighty lover to her help; she claimed a separation; and

the war-commissioner Duprat, who in the army was invested with the functions of a civil magistrate, pronounced, at the request of Madame Fourès and at the order of Bonaparte, the decree of separation.

Madame Fourès was free, but this did not satisfy the secret wishes of her heart. The most important point was, that Bonaparte should be free also, that he also should desire to be divorced. Josephine must be removed from him and thrust aside, so that the beautiful Pauline Fourès might take her place.

No means, either of coquetry, tears, flatteries, or promises of enduring love, remained untried to induce Bonaparte to take the decisive step. Sometimes Pauline would pout; sometimes her eyes shed the tears of repentance over her own faithlessness, and she vowed she would take refuge in a cloister if Bonaparte would not restore her to honor by exalting her to the position of being his wife; sometimes she sought by her cheerful humor, her genial abandonment, to bind him to her, to amuse him; and sometimes, when dressed as a general, on a fiery horse, and surrounded by a vast number of adjutants, she would ride up to him and win by her smiles and flatteries friends, who calumniated Josephine, and represented to him the necessity of a separation from his inconstant wife.

But, notwithstanding all the calumnies, and all the deceiving arts of his beloved, there existed in Bonaparte's heart something which spoke in favor of the poor, slandered, and forgotten Josephine; and, amid the exciting pleasures of his new passion, he remembered with longing, sorrowful heart the charming, gracious woman whom he once had tenderly loved, and whom he still so loved that he could not sacrifice her to his beautiful mistress. Still he persevered in showing to the latter the deepest, most tender, and undivided attention; and when the chances of war kept him away from her for a long time, when he went to Syria

and left her in Cairo, Bonaparte wrote to her every day the most touching letters, which were forwarded by a special courier.

This was occurring at the same time that Josephine in Paris was hoping in vain with painful longing for letters from her husband, and was watching over his interests with the kindest attention, while his enemies were spreading news of his death.

Bonaparte had now no time to write to his wife, for the beautiful Pauline Fourès laid claim to the little leisure which remained to the commanding general, and to her he addressed warm and glowing words of love, such as while in Italy he had addressed to Josephine when he swore to her never to love another woman.

Meanwhile Fate rendered fruitless all the efforts of the beautiful Madame Fourès to draw Bonaparte into a separation; Fate came to Josephine's rescue, and, strange to say, it came in the shape of the *Frankfort Journal.*

The victorious battle of Aboukir, which Bonaparte, on the 25th of July, 1799, had with his army won over the enemy, gave occasion to parleying negotiations between the French commander-in-chief and the English admiral, Sidney Smith. Bonaparte sent a commissioner on board the English flag-ship, and Sir Sidney Smith was cunning enough to send through this commissioner to the French general a few newspapers recently received from Europe. For ten months the French army and Bonaparte were without news from France, and this present of the English admiral was received by Bonaparte and his generals with the deepest joy and curiosity.

Among these papers was a copy of the *Journal de Frankfort* of the 10th of June, 1799. This was the first newspaper which furnished Bonaparte with news from France for ten long months, and the natural consequence was that he glanced over it with the most inquisitive im-

patience. Suddenly he uttered a cry; the pallor of death overspread his face, and, fixing his flaming eyes on Bourrienne, who at this moment was alone with him—"My presentiments have not deceived me," exclaimed Bonaparte. "Italy is lost! The wretched creatures! All the results of our victories have vanished! I must go to France at once—this very moment!" *

This newspaper informed Bonaparte of the late events in France. It told him that the French Directory had experienced a change, that only one of them, Barras, had remained in it, and that four new directors—Sieyès, Gohier, Moulins, and Ducos—were now its members. It told him much more—that the French army in Italy had suffered the most disastrous reverses; that all Italy had been reconquered by the combined armies of Russia and Austria under Suwarrow and the Archduke Charles, who were now advancing upon France, which was on every side surrounded by the revengeful enemies of the republic.

No sooner had Bonaparte read this news than his decision was taken. Berthier was called into his tent, and under the seal of silence Bonaparte communicated to him his unwavering resolution of going immediately to France, but that this was to remain a secret to his whole army as well as all the generals. Berthier, Gautheaume, Eugene Beauharnais, Monge, and Bourrienne, were alone to accompany him, but the last two were not to be made acquainted with their departure for Europe before they had left Cairo with Bonaparte. As he noticed gleams of joy in Berthier's face at the news of returning to France, Bonaparte once more impressed upon him the duty of preserving silence and not to betray the secret by word or deed, and to do nothing which might induce friends or acquaintances to believe that a voyage was contemplated. The secret was

* Bourrienne, "Mémoires," vol. ii., p. 305.

indeed faithfully kept, and the few confidants intrusted with it took great care to divulge nothing, for fear he might punish them by leaving them in Egypt.

Bonaparte himself maintained the most absolute secrecy; neither his beloved, the beautiful Pauline Fourès, nor General Kleber, whom he had chosen to be his successor in the chief command of the army of Egypt, suspected any thing.

To his beloved, Bonaparte said he was leaving Cairo for the sake of making a tour through the Delta, and that in a few weeks he would be with her again. The news he had received from Europe had suddenly cooled the glow of his passion, and, at the thought of returning to France, rose up again before his mind the image of Josephine in all her grace and loveliness. For a long time, while she was not at his side, he had been unfaithful to her, but he did not wish, for his own sake, to add scandal to faithlessness. He did not wish to bring to France with him, as sole booty from Egypt, a mistress.

Pauline Fourès, therefore, suspected as little of his plans as General Kleber. It was only after Bonaparte, with his small suite of five confidants and the Mameluke Roustan, had embarked at Alexandria, that Pauline learned that he had deserted—that he had abandoned her. In a short note which his master of the stall, Vigogne, handed to her, Bonaparte took leave of her, and made her a present of every thing he left behind in Cairo, including the house he occupied, with all its costly and luxurious furniture.*

* The departure of Bonaparte made Madame Fourès comfortless, and she now watched for an opportunity to hasten back to him in France. Touched by her tears and prayers, Junot furnished her with an opportunity, and Pauline reached Paris in November, 1799. But Bonaparte would no longer see her; he now sacrificed the mistress to the wife, as he had nearly sacrificed the wife to the mistress. Pauline received orders to leave Paris immediately; at the same time Bona-

General Kleber learned Bonaparte's departure, only through the orders sent to him by the latter to assume the chief command of the army; his troops learned his absence by the order of the day, in which Bonaparte bade them farewell.

After four weeks of a long voyage against tempestuous and contrary winds, the two frigates, upon one of which Bonaparte and Eugene and his other followers had embarked, touched at Ajaccio. The whole population had no sooner learned that Bonaparte was in the harbor, than they rushed out to see him, and to salute him with enthusiastic demonstrations; and it was in vain that their attention was drawn to the fact that both frigates had come directly from Egypt, and had to observe quarantine before any communication with the population could be allowed.

"Pestilence sooner than the Austrians!" shouted the people, and hundreds and hundreds of boats surrounded the French vessels. Every one wanted to see the general, their famous countryman, Bonaparte. But Bonaparte's heart was sorrowful amid the general rejoicing, for in Ajaccio he had learned of the great battle of Novi, where the Austrians had gained the victory, and which had cost General Joubert's life.

"It is too great an evil," said he, with a sigh; "there is no help for it." But as he gave up Italy, all his thoughts were more strongly bent upon Paris, and his desire to be there as soon as possible increased more and more.

After a short stay in Ajaccio, the voyage to France, despite all quarantine regulations, was continued, and the star of fortune, which had hitherto protected him, still guided Bonaparte safely into the harbor of Fréjus, though

parte sent her a large sum of money, which he afterward repeated.—See Saint Elsné, "Les Amours et Galanteries des Rois de France," vol. ii., p. 320.

the English fleet had watched and pursued the French vessels. A courier was at once dispatched to the Directory in Paris to announce the arrival of Bonaparte, and that he would, without any delay, come to Paris.

Josephine was at a dinner at Gohier's, one of the five directors, when this courier arrived, and with a shout of joy she received the news of her husband's coming. Her longing was such that she could not wait for him in Paris, in her house of the Rue de la Victoire. She resolved to meet him, and to be the first to bid him welcome, and to show him her unutterable love.

No sooner was this resolution taken than it was carried out. She began her journey with the expectation of meeting her husband at Lyons, for in his letter to the Directory he stated that he would come by way of Lyons. In great haste, without rest or delay, Josephine travelled the road to that city, her heart beating, her luminous eyes gazing onward, looking with inexpressible expectancy at every approaching carriage, for it might bring her the husband so long absent from her!

She little suspected that while she was hastening toward Lyons, Bonaparte had already arrived in Paris. He had changed the plan of his journey, and, entirely controlled by his impatient desires, he had driven to Paris by the shortest route. Josephine was not there to receive him in her house; she was not there to welcome the returning one—and the old serpent of jealousy and mistrust awoke again within him. To add to this, his brothers and sisters had seized the occasion to give vent to their ill-will by suspicions and accusations against their unwelcome sister-in-law. Bonaparte, full of sad apprehension at her absence, perhaps secretly wishing to find her guilty, listened to the whisperings of her enemies.

He therefore did not go to meet Josephine the next day on her return from her unsuccessful journey. A few hours

after, he opened his closed doors and went to see her. She advanced toward him with looks full of love and tenderness, and opened her arms to him, and wanted to press him closely to her heart.

But he coldly held her back, and with deliberate severity and an expression of the highest indifference, he saluted her, and asked if she had returned happy and satisfied from her pleasure excursion with her light-haired friend.

Josephine's tears gushed forth, and, as if annihilated, she sank down, but she had not a word of defence or of justification against the cruel accusation. Her heart had been too deeply wounded, her love too much insulted, to allow her to defend herself. Her tearful eyes only responded to Bonaparte's cruel question, and then in silence she retired to her apartments.

For three days they did not see each other. Josephine remained in her rooms and wept. Bonaparte remained in his rooms and complained. To Bourrienne, who then was not only his private secretary but also his confidant, he complained bitterly of the faithlessness and inconstancy of Josephine, of the unheard-of indifference that she should undertake a pleasure-journey when she knew that he was soon to be in Paris. It was in vain that Bourrienne assured him that Josephine had undertaken no pleasure-excursion, that she had left Paris only to meet him, and to be the first to bid him welcome. He would not believe him, for in the melancholy gloominess of his jealousy he believed in the slanders which Josephine's enemies, and his brothers and sisters, had whispered in his ear, that Josephine had left Paris for a *parti de plaisir* with Charles Botot, the beautiful *blondin* whom Bonaparte so deeply hated. How profound his sadness was, may be seen by a letter which at this time he wrote to his brother Joseph, and in which he says:

"I have a great deal of domestic sorrow . . . your friendship to me is very dear; to become a misanthrope, there was nothing further needed than to lose her and to be betrayed by you. It is a sad situation indeed to have in one single heart all these emotions for the same person.

"I will purchase a country residence either near Paris or in Burgundy; I am thinking of passing the winter there and of shutting myself up; I feel weary with human nature; I need solitude; I want to be alone; grandeur oppresses me, my feelings are distorted. Fame appears insipid at my twenty-nine years; I have tried every thing; nothing remains but to become an egotist." *

But, according to himself, "he cherished in his heart, at the same time, all manner of emotions for the same person;" that is, he hated and detested Josephine, but he also loved and admired her; was angry with her, and yet longed for her; he found her frivolous and faithless, and yet something in his heart ever spoke in her favor, and assured him that she was a noble and faithful being.

Fortunately, there was one who confirmed into full conviction these low whisperings of his heart; fortunately, Bourrienne ceased not to argue against this jealousy of Bonaparte, and to assure him again and again that Josephine was innocent, that she had committed nothing to excite his anger.

Finally, after three days of complaints and dreary accusations, love conquered in the heart of Bonaparte. He went to Josephine. She advanced to meet him with tears in her eyes, but with a soft, tender smile. The sight of her gracious appearance, her blanched cheeks, moved him, and, instead of explanations and mutual recriminations, he opened his arms to her, and she threw herself on his breast with a loud cry of exultation.

* "Mémoires du Ròi Joseph," vol. i., p. 189.

Then came the explanations. He now believed that she had left Paris hurriedly for the sake of meeting him; and, as regarded the dangerous "blond," the private secretary of Barras, M. Charles Botot, Josephine smilingly handed to her husband a letter she had received from him a few days before. In this letter Charles Botot acknowledged his long-cherished affection for her daughter Hortense, and he claimed her hand in due form.

"And you have doubtless accepted his offer?" asked Bonaparte, his face overcast again. "Since, unfortunately, you are married yourself, and he cannot be your husband, then of course he must marry the daughter, so as to be always near the mother. M. Charles Botot is no doubt to be your son-in-law? You have accepted his hand?"

"No," said she, softly, "we have refused it, for Hortense does not love him, and she will follow her mother's example, and marry only through love. Besides," continued Josephine, with a sweet smile, "I wanted him no longer."

"You wanted him no longer! How is this?" asked General Bonaparte, eagerly.

"Barras has sent him his dismissal," said she, looking at her husband with an expression of cunning roguery. "M. Botot could no longer, as he has hitherto been—without, however, being conscious of it—be my spy in the Directory; I could no longer learn from him what the Directory were undertaking against my Bonaparte, against the hero whom they envy and caluminate so much, nor in what new snares they wished to entangle him! What had I to do with Botot, since he could not furnish me news of the intrigues of your enemies, nor afford me the chance of counteracting them? Charles Botot was nothing more to me than a mere lemon, which I squeezed for your sake; when there was nothing left in it I threw it away."

"And is such the truth?" asked Bonaparte, eagerly.

"This is no invention to raise my hopes, only to be cast down again?"

Josephine smiled. "I have daily taken notes of what Charles Botot brought me," said she, gently; "I always hoped to find a safe opportunity to send this diary to you in Egypt, that you might be informed of what the Directory thought, and what was the public opinion, so that you might take your measures accordingly. But, for the last eight months, I knew not where you were, and so I have kept my diary: here it is."

She gave the diary to Bonaparte, who, with impatient looks, ran over the pages, and was fully convinced of her devotedness and care. Josephine had well served his interests, and closely watched over his affairs. Then, ashamed and repentant, he looked at her, who, in return, smiled at him with gracious complacency.

"Josephine," asked he, quietly, "can you forgive me? I have been foolish, but I swear to you that never again will I mistrust you, I will believe no one but you. Can you forgive me?"

She embraced him in her arms, and tenderly said: "Love me, Bonaparte; I well deserve it!"

Peace, therefore, was re-established, and Josephine's enemies had the bitter disappointment to see that their efforts had all been in vain; that again the most perfect unanimity and affection existed between them; that the cloud which their enmity had conjured up, had brought forth but a few tear-drops, a few thunderings; and that the love which Bonaparte carried in his heart for Josephine was not scattered into atoms.

The cloud had passed away; the sun of happiness had reappeared; but it had yet some spots which were never to fade away. The word "separation" which Bonaparte, so often in Egypt, and now in Paris, had launched against Josephine, was to be henceforth the sword of Damocles,

ever suspended over her head: like a dark, shadowy spectre it was to follow her everywhere; even amid scenes of happiness, joy, and glory, it was to be there to terrify her by its sinister presence, and by its gloomy warnings of the past!

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE.

BONAPARTE'S journey from Fréjus to Paris, on his return from Egypt, had been a continued triumph. All France had applauded him. Everywhere he had been welcomed as a deliverer and savior; everywhere he had been hailed as the hope of the future, as the man from whom was to be expected assistance in distress, the restoration of peace, help, and salvation.

For France was alarmed; she stood on the edge of a precipice, from which only the strong hand of a hero could save her. In the interior, anarchy prevailed amongst the authorities as well as the people. In La Vendée civil war raged, with all its sanguinary horrors, and the authorities endeavored to protect themselves against it by tyrannical laws, by despotic measures, which threatened both property and freedom. There existed no security either for person or for property, and a horrible, fanatical party-spirit penetrated all classes of society. The royalists had been defeated on the 18th Fructidor, but that very fact had again given the vantage-ground to the most decided opponents of the royalists, the red republicans, the terrorists of the past, who now intrigued and formed plots and counterplots, even as the royalists had done. They sought to create enmity and bitterness amongst the people, and hoped to re-establish on

the ruins of the present administration the days of terror and of the guillotine.

These red republicans, ever ready for the struggle, organized themselves into clubs and "constitutional circles," where the ruin of the actual state of things, and the severe and bloody republic of Robespierre, formed the substance of their harangues; and their numbers were constantly increased by new members being sworn in.

The ballot in May, 1799, had been in favor of the Directory, and unfavorable to the moderate party, for only fanatical republicans had been elected to the Council of Five Hundred.

Against these factions and republican clubs the Directory had to make a perpetual war; but their power and means failed to give them the victory in the strife. It was a constant oscillation and vacillation, a constant compromising and capitulating with all parties—and the natural consequence was, that these parties, as soon as they had secured the ear of the Directory, and gained an advantage, strove hard to obtain the ruling authority. Corruption and mistrust universally prevailed. Every thing had the appearance of dissolution and disorder. Highwaymen rendered the roads unsafe; and the authorities, instead of carrying out the severity of the law, were so corrupt and avaricious as to sell their silence and indulgence. The upright citizen sighed under the weight of tyrannical laws from which the thief and the seditious knew how to escape.

The nation, reduced to despair by this arbitrary rule and corruption, longed for some one to deliver it from this dreadful state of dissolution; and the enthusiasm which was manifested at the return of General Bonaparte, was a confession that in him the people foresaw and recognized a deliverer. Exhausted and wearied, France sought for a man who would restore to her peace again—who would crush the foes within, and drive away the enemy from without.

Bonaparte appeared to the people with all the prestige of his former and recent victories; he had planted the victorious French tricolor upon the summit of the capitol, and of the pyramids; he had given to France the most acceptable of presents, "glory;" he had adorned her brow with so many laurels, that he himself seemed to the people as if radiant with glory. All felt the need of a hero, of a dictator, to put an end to the prevailing anarchy and disturbances, and they knew that Bonaparte was the only one who could achieve this gigantic work.

Bonaparte understood but too well these applauding and welcoming voices of the people, and his own breast responded favorably to them. The secret thoughts of his heart were now to be turned into deeds, and the ambitious dreams of his earlier days were to become realities. All that he had hitherto wanted was a bridge to throw over the abyss which separated the republicans, the defenders of liberty, equality, and fraternity, from rule, power, and dictatorship. Anarchy and exhaustion laid down this bridge, and on the 18th Brumaire, General Bonaparte, the hero of "liberal ideas," passed over it to exalt himself into dictator, consul, emperor, and tyrant of France.

But the Directory also understood the voices of the applauding people; they also saw in him the man who had come to deprive them of power and to assume their authority. This was secretly yet violently discussed by the Directory, the Council of the Elders, and of the Five Hundred.

One day, at a dinner given to a few friends by the Abbé Sieyès, one of the members of the Directory, the abbé, Cabanis, and Joseph Bonaparte, were conversing together, standing on the side of the drawing-room, near the chimney. It was conceded that undoubtedly a crisis was near at hand, that the republic had now reached its limit, and that, instead of five directors, only three would be elected, and that, without any doubt, Bonaparte would be one of the three.

"Yes," cried Sieyès, with animation, "I am for General Bonaparte, for of all military men he is the most civil; but then I know very well what is in reserve for me: once elected, the general, casting aside his two colleagues, will do as I do now." And Sieyès, standing between Canabis and Joseph, placed his two arms on their shoulders, then, pushing them with a powerful jerk, he leaped forward and bounded into the middle of the room, to the great astonishment of his guests, who knew not the cause of this gymnastic performance of the abbé.*

The other directors were also conscious of this movement of Bonaparte, and they secretly resolved to save themselves by causing his ruin. Either the Directory or Bonaparte had to fall! One had to perish, that the other might have the power! In order that the Directory might exist, Bonaparte must fall.

The Directory had secretly come to this conclusion on Bonaparte's return. They were fully aware that a daring act alone could save them, and they were determined not to shrink from it.

The deed was to take place on the 2d Brumaire. On that day he was to be arrested, and accused of having premeditated a *coup d'état* against the Directory. Indeed, one M. de Mounier had come to Director Gohier and had denounced Bonaparte, whom he positively knew was conspiring to destroy the existing government. Gohier received these accusations with much gravity, and sent at once for the other directors to hasten to him, but only one, Moulins, was then in Paris to answer Gohier's summons. He came, and after a long conference both directors agreed that the next day they would have Bonaparte arrested on his return to Paris from Malmaison, where they knew he was to give a large banquet that day. They sent for the chief of police,

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph," vol. i., p. 77.

and quietly gave him the order to station himself the next day with twelve resolute men on the road to Malmaison, and to arrest Bonaparte as he should drive that evening toward Paris.

On this very day Josephine, who did not wish to be present at the banquet of gentlemen in Malmaison, had come to Paris to attend a party at the house of one of her friends. The conversation went on; they talked and jested, when a gentleman near Josephine told a friend that some striking event would probably take place that day in Paris, for he had just now met a friend who held an important office in the police. He had invited him to go to the theatre, but he declined, stating that he was to be on duty this evening, as some important affair was about being transacted—the arrest, as he thought, of some influential personage.

Josephine's heart trembled with horrible misgivings at these words. Love's instinct convinced her that her husband was the one to be arrested, and she thought within herself that it was Destiny itself which sent her this intelligence, that she might save her husband from the fearful blow which awaited him. Thus persuaded, she gathered all her strength and presence of mind, and determined to act with energy, and battle against the enemies of her husband.

Without betraying the slightest emotion, or exciting any suspicion that she had heard or noticed what was said, Josephine rose from her seat with a cheerful and composed countenance, and pleasantly took leave of the lady of the house. But once past the threshold of the house, once in her carriage, her anxious nature woke up again, and she began to act with energy and resolution. She pulled the string, to give her directions to the driver. As fast as the horses could speed, he was to drive his mistress to Colonel Perrin, the commanding officer of the guards of the Directory. In ten minutes she was there, and knowing well how devoted a guard he and all his soldiers would be to Bonaparte, she

communicated to him her fears, and requested from him immediate and speedy assistance to remove the danger.

Colonel Perrin was prepared to enter into her plans, and he promised to send to Malmaison a company of grenadiers, provided she would, as soon as possible, have General Murat send him an order to that effect. Josephine at once went to one of her true, reliable friends, who belonged to the Council of the Elders, and, making him acquainted with the danger which threatened her husband, requested him to gather a few devoted friends, and to attend to the orders which Murat would send them.

After having made all these preparations, Josephine drove in full gallop toward Malmaison.

The dinner, to which Bonaparte had invited gentlemen from all classes of society, was just over, and the guests were scattered, some in the drawing-rooms, and some in the garden, where Bonaparte was walking up and down in animated conversation with the secretary, Roger Ducos.

At this moment the carriage of Josephine drove into the yard; and Murat, who, with a few gentlemen, stood under the porch, hastened to offer his hand so as to help Josephine to alight. An eye-witness who was present at this scene relates as follows:

"'Where is the general?' asked Josephine, hastily, of General Murat.

"'I do not know,' was the answer; 'he is gone with Roger, but Lucien is here.'

"'Look at once for the general!' exclaimed Josephine, breathless, 'I must speak to him immediately.'

"I approached her and said that he was in the garden. She ran—she flew! I placed myself at a window in the first story, from which I could easily see into the garden-walks. My expectations had not deceived me.

"No sooner did Bonaparte see Josephine approach, than he left Roger Ducos and hurried to meet her. Both then

walked into a path near by. I could see them well. Josephine spoke with animation; the general walked on; now and then she held him back. At last they took the path leading to the castle. I went down to meet them on the steps near the door.

"Madame Bonaparte held her husband by the left hand. Her animated, expressive features had a bewitching pride and softness; it was a most delightful admixture of tenderness and heroism. Bonaparte looked around, pale and grave, but his eyes ever rested with pleasure on his wife. She refused to enter into the large hall, and retired to her room. Bonaparte called for Roger, and entered the saloon with him. His guests were awaiting his arrival, to take their leave. The carriages drove up, and the gentlemen left Malmaison to return to Paris. Only Lucien and Murat remained with Bonaparte; Madame Bonaparte joined them as they entered the vestibule. When she saw Murat, she exclaimed:

"'How, general, you still here!—Do you not consider,' continued she, turning to Bonaparte, 'that Murat ought to be already in Paris with Perrin?—Away! quick! to horse, to the Rue Varennes, or I drive thither myself.'

"Murat laughed; but four minutes after he was riding at a gallop on the road to the city. The three others returned to their rooms. I was curious to know what was the conversation; but as I had nothing more to do in the castle, I was about leaping on my horse to ride to Paris, when I saw a detachment of infantry marching toward the castle.

"I thought it my duty to announce them to the general; he sat between his wife and his brother. 'How!' cried he, as he rose up hastily. 'Troops?'

"'What of them?' answered Madame Bonaparte, smiling. 'Your company has left you, now comes mine. It is a rendezvous; but be comforted—they are not too many.'

"All three walked into the yard, where the troops were placing themselves in line without the sound of a drum.

"'You are an extraordinary man, sir,' said Madame Bonaparte to the captain. 'Nearly as soon as I?'

"'Madame,' replied the officer, 'we have been ready for the march these four hours.'

"The officers followed the general into the drawing-room, and refreshments were distributed to the soldiers; it was a company of grenadiers.

"At nine o'clock in the evening, a courier arrived, bearing dispatches to Bonaparte. At once he, his wife, and his brother, drove to Paris. The grenadiers were ordered to follow immediately and in silence." *

These dispatches, which Bonaparte had received from Paris, brought him the news that this time the danger was over—that the directors had abandoned their plan. Some fortunate accident may have warned them, even as Josephine herself had been warned. The spies who everywhere tracked Josephine, as well as Bonaparte, had carried to Gohier intelligence of all the strange movements of the wife of Bonaparte, and the director at once perceived that she was informed of the danger which threatened her husband, and that she was bent upon preventing it.

But now that the plan of the directors had been unveiled, danger threatened them in their turn, and they immediately adopted measures to face this new peril. In place of Bonaparte, they must find some one whom they could arrest, without withdrawing their orders. They found a substitute in a wealthy merchant from Hamburg, who now resided in Paris. Gohier had him arrested, and accused him of having had relations with the enemies of France.

Bonaparte assumed the appearance of having no doubts as to the sincerity of Gohier, of suspecting nothing as to his own arrest, which had been prevented by the timely and

* "Mémoires secrètes," vol. i., p. 26.

energetic action of Josephine. He thanked her with increased tenderness for her love and faithfulness, and as he pressed her affectionately to his breast, he swore to her that he would never again doubt her; that he would, by the most unreserved confidence, share with her his schemes and designs, and that henceforth he would look upon her as the good angel who watched over the pathway of his life.

And Bonaparte kept his word. From this day his Josephine was not only his wife, but his confidante, his friend, who knew all his plans, and who could assist him with her advice and her exquisite practical tact. She it was who brought about a reconciliation with Moreau and Bernadotte; and by her amiable nature, attractive and dignified manner, and great social talents, she bound even his friends closer to Bonaparte; or with a smile, a kind word, some flattering observation, or some of those little attentions which oftentimes tell more effectually with those who receive them than great services, she would often win over to him his foes and opponents.

"It is known but to few persons," says the author of the "Mémoires secrètes," "that Bonaparte always consulted his wife in civil matters, even when they were of the highest importance. This fact is entirely true, but Bonaparte would have been extremely mortified had he known that those around him suspected it. Had it been possible for me to divide my being, with what delight I should have followed this noble woman! I would relate a few traits of hers if I did not know that M. D. B., who is much better acquainted with her than I, is to write a biography.* I know not what were the events of the first years of Madame de Beauharnais, but if they were like those of her last fifteen years,

* The "Mémoires secrètes" appeared in 1815. The biography spoken of by the author is probably that of Madame Ducrest, and which appeared in 1818.

we should have the history of a perfect woman. She has known but little of me, and therefore no interested motive guides my pen, no other sentiment than that of truth." *

The 2d Brumaire afforded sufficient reasons for Bonaparte to put into execution his resolutions. He now knew the enmity of the Directory; he knew he must cause their downfall if he himself did not wish to be destroyed by them. He knew that, during his last triumphal journey through France, he had heard sufficient to convince him that the voice of the people was for him, that every one longed for a change, that France was heartily wearied of revolutionary commotions, and above all things craved for rest and peace; that it wished to lay aside all political strife, and, like him, preferred to have nothing more to do with a republican majority.

"Every one desires a more central government," said Napoleon to his brother Joseph. "Our dreams of a republic are the illusions of youth. Since the 9th Thermidor the republican party has dwindled away more and more; the efforts of the Bourbons and the foreigners, coupled with the memories of '93, have called forth against the republican system an imposing majority. If it had not been for the 13th Vendémiaire and the 18th Fructidor, this majority would long ago have won the ascendency; the weaknesses, the imperiousness of the Directory, have done the rest. To-day the people are turning their hopes toward me, to-morrow it will be toward some one else."

Bonaparte did not wish to wait until to-morrow. He had made all his preparations; he had made sure of his generals and officers; he knew also that the soldiers were for him, and that it required but a signal from him to bring about the catastrophe.

He gave the signal by inviting on the 18th Brumaire, to

* "Mémoires secrètes," vol. i., p. 36.

a *déjeuner* in his house, all his confidants and friends, all the generals and superior officers, and also the commanding general of the National Guards. Nearly all of them came at this invitation; only General Bernadotte kept aloof, as he perceived that the breakfast had other objects than to converse and to eat. Sieyès and Ducos were the only directors who made their appearance; Gohier, that morning, had sent to Bonaparte an invitation to dinner, so as to deceive the more securely him whom he knew was his enemy; Barras and Moulins, suspecting Bonaparte's schemes, remained in the background, silently awaiting the result.

While the guests were assembling in Bonaparte's house, and filling all the space in it, a friend and confidant of Bonaparte, in the Council of the Elders, made the following motion: "In consideration of the intense political excitement which prevails in Paris, it is necessary to remove the sessions to St. Cloud, and to give to General Bonaparte the supreme command of the troops."

After a violent debate, the motion was suddenly adopted; and, when it was brought to Bonaparte, he saw that the moment for action had come.

He told all those about him that at last the time was at hand to restore to France rest and peace, that he was decided to do this, and he called upon them to follow him. Every one was ready, and, surrounded by a brilliant suite, Bonaparte went first to the Council of the Elders, to express his thanks for his nomination, and solemnly to swear that he would adopt every measure necessary to save the country.

Immediately after this he went to the Tuileries to hold a review of the troops stationed there. The soldiers and the people, who had streamed thither in masses to see him, received him with loud acclamations, assuring him of their loyalty and devotedness.

No one this day rose in favor of the deputies, no one

seemed to desire that their sittings should as heretofore take place in Paris, nor to think that force would have to be used to remove them.

The palace of Luxemburg, in which their sittings had hitherto taken place, and St. Cloud, in which they were to meet in the future, were both, by orders of Bonaparte, surrounded with troops, and the deputies as well as the Council of the Elders adjourned that very day to St. Cloud.

Moulins and Gohier alone had the courage to offer opposition, and, in a letter to the Council of the Elders, to describe Bonaparte as a criminal, who threatened the republic, and to demand of them his arrest; and also that they should immediately decree that the republic was in danger, and that it must be defended with all energy. But this letter fell into Bonaparte's hands; and the directors, when they saw that their request was unheeded, resigned, as Barras had done.

The republic now had but two legitimate rulers, Sieyès and Ducos; and at their side stood Bonaparte, soon to exalt himself above them.

The following day, the 19th Brumaire, was actually the decisive day. The Five Hundred, who now, like the Council of the Elders, held their deliberations in St. Cloud, were discussing under great excitement the abdication of the Directory and the necessity of a new election. The debates were so vehement and so full of passion that the president, Lucien Bonaparte, could not command order. A wild uproar arose, and at this moment Napoleon entered the hall. Every one rushed at him with wild frenzy; and the most violent recriminations were launched at him. "He is a traitor!" they cried out. "He is a Cromwell, who wants to seize the sovereign power!" What Bonaparte had never experienced on the battle-field, in the thickest of the fight, he now felt. He became bewildered by this violent strife of words, by this hailstorm of accusations which whizzed

around his ears. He tried to speak; he tried to address the audience, but he could not—he could merely give utterance to a few broken sentences; he made charges against the Directory, with assurances of his own loyalty and devotedness, which the audience received with loud murmurs, and then with wild shouts. Bonaparte became more embarrassed and bewildered. Suddenly turning toward the door of the hall, he exclaimed, "Who loves me, let him follow me!" and he walked out hastily.

The soldiers outside received him with great cheers, and this brought back Bonaparte's presence of mind. "General," whispered Augereau, as they mounted their horses, "you are in a critical position."

"Think of Arcola," replied Bonaparte, calmly. "There the position seemed still more critical. Have patience for half an hour, and you will see how things change."

Bonaparte made good use of this half hour. At its expiration he re-entered the hall of deliberation of the Five Hundred, surrounded by his officers, at the very moment when, on a motion of a member, they were renewing their oaths to the constitution. Again they received him with shouts: "Down with the tyrant!—down with the dictator! The sanctity of the law is violated! Death to the tyrant who brings soldiers here to do us violence!"

One of the deputies rushed upon Bonaparte and seized him, but at that instant the grenadiers also entered the room, delivered their general, and carried him in triumph out of the hall.

After his departure, the waves of wrath and political frenzy rose higher and higher. Shouts and imprecations filled the room with confusion; reproaches fell on all sides upon the president, Lucien Bonaparte, for not having immediately ordered the arrest of the traitor, who by his appearance, as well as by his armed escort, had insulted the assembly. When Lucien endeavored to defend Napoleon's

conduct, he was interrupted by the cries: "He is a stain on the republic! He has tarnished his reputation!" Louder and wilder rose the cry to declare Napoleon an outlaw.*

Lucien refused, and, as they urged their demand with increasing violence, he left the presidential chair, and with deep emotion put off the insignia of his office—his mantle and his sash—and was at the point of making for himself an outlet through the wild crowd pressing in frenzy around him, when the doors opened, and a company of grenadiers rushed in, who by main force carried him away out of the hall.

Lucien, whom Napoleon awaited outside with his troops, immediately mounted his horse, and in this moment of deepest danger kept his presence of mind, being fully aware that he must now be decided to save himself and his brother or perish with him. He turned to the troops, and ordered them to protect the president of the Five Hundred, to defend the constitution attacked by a few fanatics, and to obey General Bonaparte, who was empowered by the Council of the Elders to arrest the seditious, and to protect the republic and its laws.

The soldiers answered him with the acclamation, "Long live Bonaparte!" But a certain shudder was visible. A few warning voices were lifted up; they thought it strange that weapons should be directed against the representatives of the country.

By a dramatic action Lucien brought the matter to a close, though it was at the time meant by him in all sincerity. He drew his sword, and, directing its point toward Napoleon's breast, he exclaimed: "I swear to pierce even my brother's heart if he ever dares touch the liberty of France!"

These words had an electric effect; every one felt in-

* "Mémoires du Roi Joseph."

spired, lifted up, and swore to obey Bonaparte, and to remain loyal to him even unto death. At a sign from Napoleon, Murat, with his grenadiers, dashed into the hall and drove away the assembly of the Five Hundred. At ten o'clock that evening St. Cloud was vacant; only a few deputies, like homeless night-birds, wandered around the palace out of which they had been so violently ejected.

In the interior of St. Cloud, Bonaparte was busy preparing for the people of Paris a proclamation, in which he justified his deed, and repeated the sacred assurance "that he would protect liberty and the republic against all her enemies at home as well as abroad." When this was done, it was necessary to think of giving to the French people a new government, instead of the one which had been broken up. Napoleon had been in conference until the dawn of day with Talleyrand, Roderer, and Sieyès. Meanwhile Lucien had gathered around him in a room the members of the Five Hundred who were devoted to him, and had resumed the presidential chair; Napoleon's friends among the members of the Council of the Elders also gathered together, and both assemblies issued a decree, in which they declared there was no longer a Directory, and in which they excluded from the assembly as rebellious and factious a vast number of deputies. And more, they decreed the nomination of a provisional commission, and decided that it should consist of three members, who should bear the title of Consuls of the Republic, and they appointed as consuls Sieyès, Ducos, and Bonaparte.

At three o'clock in the morning every thing was ready, and Napoleon, accompanied by Bourrienne, went to Paris. He had reached his goal; he was at the head of the administration, but his countenance betrayed no joyous excitement; he was taciturn and pensive, and during the whole journey to Paris he spoke not a word, but quietly leaned in a corner of the carriage. Perhaps he dreamed of a great and

brilliant future; perhaps he was busy with the thought how he could ascend higher on this ladder to a throne, whose first step he had now ascended, since he had exalted himself into a consul of the republic.

Not till he arrived at his residence in the *Rue de la Victoire* did Bonaparte's cheerfulness return, when, with countenance beaming with joy, and followed by Bourrienne, he hastened to Josephine, who, exhausted by anxiety and care during this day full of danger, had finally gone to rest. Near her bed Bonaparte sank into an arm-chair, and, gazing at her and seizing her hand, he turned smilingly to Bourrienne:

"Is it not true," said he—"I said many foolish things?"

"Well, yes, general, that cannot be denied," replied Bourrienne, shrugging his shoulders, while Josephine broke out into loud, joyous laughter.

"I would sooner speak to soldiers than to lawyers," said Bonaparte, cheerfully. "These honorable fools made me timid. I am not accustomed to speak to an audience—but that will come in time."

With affectionate sympathy Josephine requested him to relate in detail all the events of the day; and she listened with breathless attention to the descriptions which Bonaparte made in his own terse, brief, and lucid manner.

"And Gohier?" said she, at last—"you know I love his wife, and when you were in Egpyt he was ever kind and attentive to me. You will not touch him, will you, *mon ami?*"

Bonaparte shrugged his shoulders. "What of it, my love?" said he; "it is not my fault if he is pushed aside. Why has he not wished it otherwise? He is a good-natured man, but a blockhead. He does not understand me. . . . I would do much better to have him transported. He wrote against me to the Council of the Elders, but his letter fell into my hands, and the council has heard

nothing of it. The unfortunate man! . . . . Yesterday he expected me to dinner. . . . And that is called statesmanship. . . . Let us speak no more of this matter." *

Then he began to relate to his Josephine how Bernadotte had acted, refusing to take any part in the events of the day, and how, when Bonaparte had requested him at least to undertake nothing against him, he answered: "As a citizen, I will keep quiet; but if the Directory gives me the order to act, I will fight against every disturber of the peace and every conspirator, whoever he may be."

Bonaparte then suddenly turned to Bourrienne to dismiss him, that he might himself take some rest; and when he extended his hand to bid him farewell, he added, carelessly:

"Apropos, to-morrow we sleep in the Luxemburg." It was decided!—the long-premeditated deed was done! With the 18th Brumaire, Bonaparte had made an important step forward on the path of fame and power whose end was seen by him alone.

Bonaparte was no longer a general receiving orders from a superior authority; he was no longer the servant of the Directory; but he was now the one who would give orders—he was the master and ruler; he stood at the head of the French nation; he made the laws, and his deep, clear eye looked far beyond both consuls who stood at his side, into that future when he alone would be at the head of France; when, instead of the uprooted throne of the lilies, he would sit in the Tuileries, in the chair of the First Consul, this chair of a Cæsar, which could so easily become an emperor's throne!

On the 20th Brumaire, Napoleon occupied the residence of the Directory in the palace of the Luxemburg, after he had, through his brother Louis, made Gohier prisoner, the

* Bonaparte's own words.—See Bourrienne, vol. iii., p. 106.

only one of the directors who still lingered there, and whom he afterward released. Josephine's intercession procured the liberty of the husband of her friend, and this generous pardon of the furious letter which Gohier had written against him was the thank-offering which Bonaparte presented to the gods as he made his entrance into the Luxemburg.

The Luxemburg itself was, however, but a relay for a change of horses in the wondrous journey which Bonaparte had to travel from the lawyer's house on the island of Corsica to the throne-room of the Bourbons in the palace of the Tuileries.

In simple equipage, he with Josephine made his entrance into the Luxemburg, but after the rest of a few weeks he left this station, to make his entrance into the Tuileries in a magnificent carriage, drawn by the six splendid grays which the Emperor of Austria had presented to General Bonaparte in Campo Formio. For already another change had taken place in the government of France, and the trefoil-leaf of the consuls had assumed another form.

The two consuls, who had stood at the side of Bonaparte, invested with equal powers, had been set aside by the new constitution of the year VIII., which the people had adopted on the 17th of February, 1800 (18th Pluviôse, year VIII.). This constitution named Bonaparte as consul for ten years, and with him two other consuls, who were more his secretaries than his colleagues. Next to him was Cambacérès, as second consul for ten years, and then Lebrun, as third consul for five years.

With these two consuls, Bonaparte, on the 19th of February, 1800, made his solemn entry into the Tuileries. The old century, with its Bourbon throne, its bloody revolution, its horrors, its party passions, had passed away, and the new century found in the Tuileries a hero who wanted to

crush all parties with a hand of iron, and to place his foot on the head of the revolution, so as to close the abyss which it had opened, in order to build himself an emperor's throne over it.

He was for the present satisfied to hear himself called "First Consul;" he was willing for a short time to grant to the two men who sat at his side in the carriage drawn by the six imperial grays, that they should share the power with him, and should consider themselves vested with the same authority. But Cambacérès and Lebrun had a keen ear for the joyful shouts with which the people followed their triumphal march from the Luxemburg to the Tuileries. They knew very well that these shouts and acclamations were not addressed to them, but only to General Bonaparte, the conqueror of Lodi and Arcola, the hero of the pyramids, the "savior of society," who, on the 18th Brumaire, had rescued France from the terrorists. Both consuls were shrewd enough to draw a lesson from this enthusiasm of the people, and willingly to fall back into the shade rather than to be forced into it. The Tuileries had been appointed for the residence of the three consuls, but the next day after their triumphal entry Cambacérès left the royal palace to take up his abode in the Hotel Elbœuf, on the *Place de Carrousel.* Lebrun, who at first made the Flora Pavilion his headquarters, soon found it more advisable to take his lodgings elsewhere, and he left the Tuileries, to make his residence in the *Faubourg St. Honoré.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE TUILERIES.

The Tuileries had again found a master; the halls where Marie Antoinette received her joyous guests, her beautiful lady-friends, were now again alive with elegant female figures, and resounded with gay voices, cheerful laughter, and unaffected pleasantry. The apartments in which Louis XVI. had passed such sad and fearful days, where he had laid with his ministers such nefarious schemes, and where royalty had been trodden down under the feet of the infuriated populace—these rooms were now occupied by the hero who had subdued the people, slain the revolution, and restored to France peace and glory.

The Tuileries had again found a master—the throne-room was still vacant and empty, for the first consul of the republic dared not yet lay claim to this throne which the revolution had destroyed, and which the republic had forever removed from France. But if there was no throne in the Tuileries, there was at least a court; and "Madame Etiquette," driven away from the royal palace since the days of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, had again, though with modest and timid step, slipped into the Tuileries. It is true, she now clandestinely occupied a servant's room; but the day was not far distant when, as Egeria, she would whisper advice and dictate laws to the ear of the new Numa Pompilius; when all doors would be open to her, and when she alone would, at all times, have access to the mighty lord of France.

In the Luxemburg, the fraternity and the equality of the revolution had been set aside, as, long before, on the 13th Vendémiaire, the liberty of the revolution had been cast away. In the Luxemburg the "citoyenne" Bonaparte had become "Madame" Bonaparte, and the young daughter of

the citizeness Josephine heard herself called "Mademoiselle" Hortense!

After the entrance into the Tuileries, fraternity and equality disappeared rapidly, and the distinctions of gentlemen and servants, rulers and subjects, superiors and subordinates, were again introduced. The chief of the administration was surrounded with honors and distinctions; the court, with all its grades, degrees, and titles, was there; it had its courtiers, flatterers, and defamers; and also its brilliant festivities, splendors, and pomp!

It is true this was not the work of a moment, nor so rapid an achievement as the transition from the Luxemburg to the Tuileries, but the introduction of the words "madame" and "monsieur" removed the first obstacle which held the whole French nation bound to the same platform; and a second obstacle had fallen, when permission was granted to all the *émigrés*, with the exception of the royal family, to return to their native country.

The aristocrats of old France returned in vast numbers; they, the bearers of old names of glory, the legitimists, who had fled before the guillotine, now hoped to win again the throne from the consulate.

They kept themselves, however, aloof from the consul, whose greatness and power were derived from the revolution, and who was to them a representative of the rebellious, criminal republic; but they presented themselves to his wife, they brought their homage to Josephine, the born aristocrat, the relative and friend of so many emigrant families, and they hoped, through her influence, to obtain what they dared not ask from the first consul—the re-establishment of the throne of the Bourbons.

These aristocrats knew very well that Josephine longed for the return of the royal family; that in her heart she cherished love and loyalty to the unfortunate royal couple; and that, without any personal ambition, without any desire

for fame, but with the devotedness of a royalist, and the affection of a noble, sensitive woman, she sighed for the time when Bonaparte would again restore to the heir of Louis XVI. the throne of the lilies, and recall to France the Count de Lille, to replace him as king on his brother's throne.

In fact, Josephine had faith in this fairy-tale of her royal heart; she believed in those dreams with which her tender conscience lulled her to repose, whenever she reproached herself, that she, the subject, now walked and gave orders as mistress in this palace of royalty! Why, indeed, could she not believe in the realization of those dreams, since Bonaparte himself seemed to cherish no further wishes than to rest on his laurels, and to enjoy, in delightful privacy, the peace he had given to France?

"I am looked upon as ambitious," said Bonaparte one day, in the confidential evening conversations with his friends in Josephine's drawing-rooms, "I am looked upon as ambitious, and why? Listen, my friends, to what I am going to tell you, and which you may repeat to all. In three years I shall retire from public life; I shall then have about fifty thousand livres income, and that is sufficient for my mode of living. I will get a country residence, since Josephine loves a country life. One thing only I need, and this I claim—I want to be the justice of the peace for my circuit. Now, say, am I ambitious?"

Every one laughed at the strange conceit of Bonaparte, who wished to exchange his present course for the position of a justice of the peace, and Bonaparte chimed in heartily with the laughter.

But Josephine believed those words of Bonaparte, and their echoes had perchance penetrated even to Russia, to the ears of the pretender to the French throne, the Count de Lille, and to the ears of the Count d'Artois, his brother, and they both therefore based their hopes on Josephine's winning her husband to the cause of the Bourbons.

Both sent their secret emissaries to Paris, to enter into some compact with Josephine, and to prepare their pathway to the throne, after having failed to negotiate directly with Bonaparte, who had repelled all their efforts, and with haughty pride had answered the autograph letter of the Count de Lille.

The Count d'Artois, enlightened by the fruitless efforts of his brother, resorted to another scheme. He sent a female emissary to Paris—not to Bonaparte, but to Josephine. Napoleon himself speaks of it, in his Memorial of St. Helena, as follows:

"The Count d'Artois made his advances in a more eloquent and refined manner. He sent to Paris the Duchess de Guiche, a charming woman, who by the elegance of her manners and by her personal attractions was well calculated to bring to a favorable result the object of her mission. She easily obtained an introduction to Madame Bonaparte, who was acquainted with all the persons of the old court. The beautiful duchess was therefore invited to a *déjeuner* at Malmaison; and during breakfast, when the conversation ran upon London, the emigrants, and the princes, Madame de Guiche stated that a few days before she had called upon the Count d'Artois. They had spoken of current events, of the future of France, of the royal family, and one of the confidants had asked the prince what would be the reward of the first consul if he re-established the Bourbons! The prince answered: 'First of all he would be created *connétable*, with all the privileges attached to that rank, if that were agreeable to him. But that would not be enough; we would erect to him on the *Place de Carrousel* a tall and costly column, and on it we would raise the statue of Bonaparte crowning the Bourbons.' A short time after the *déjeuner* the consul entered, and Josephine had nothing more pressing to do than to relate to him all these details. 'And have you inquired,' asked her husband, 'whether this

column would have for a pedestal the corpse of the first consul?' The beautiful duchess was still present, and with her winning ways she was well calculated to carry her point. 'I shall ever be happy,' said she, 'and grateful for the kindness of Madame Bonaparte in having granted me the opportunity of gazing upon and listening to a great man—a hero.' But it was all in vain; the Duchess de Guiche the same night received orders to depart immediately; and the beauty of this emissary appeared to Josephine too dangerous for her urgently to intercede in her behalf. Early next morning Madame de Guiche was on her way to the frontier." *

The Count de Lille chose for his mediator a very devoted servant, the most skilful of all his agents, the Marquis de Clermont Gallerande. He also was kindly received by Josephine, and he found access to her ear. With intense sympathy, and tears in her eyes, she bade him tell her the sad wanderings of that unfortunate man, "his majesty the King of France," and who as a fugitive was barely tolerated, roaming from court to court, a *protégé* of the good-will of foreign potentates. Drawn away by her generous heart, and by her unswerving loyalty to the faith of her childhood, she spoke enthusiastically of the young royal couple who once had ruled in the Tuileries; and she went so far as to express the hope that Bonaparte would again make good what the revolution had destroyed, and that he would restore to the King of France his lost throne.

The Marquis de Clermont, to prove to her what confidence he reposed in her, and what consideration the King of France entertained for the first consul and his adored wife, communicated to her a letter from the Count de Lille to him, which was in itself a masterpiece, well calculated to move the heart of Josephine.

The Count de Lille portrayed in this letter first the

* "Mémorial de Ste. Hélène," vol. i., p. 34.

dangers which would threaten Bonaparte if he should allow himself to be drawn into the inconsiderate and criminal step of placing the crown of France on his own head, and then continued:

"Sitting upon a volcano, Bonaparte would sooner or later be destroyed by it if he hastens not in due time to close the crater. Sitting upon the first step of the throne restored by his own hand, he would be the object of a monarch's gratitude; he would receive from France the highest regards, the more pure since they would be the result of his administration and of public esteem. No one can convince him of these truths better than she whose fortune is bound up with his, who can be happy only in his happiness and honored only in his reputation. I consider it a great point gained if you can come into some relation with her. I know her sentiments from days of old. The Count de Vermeuil, ex-governor of the Antilles, whose judgment as you know is most excellent, has told me more than once that in Martinique he had often noticed how her fealty to the crown deepened nearly to distraction; and the protection which she grants to my faithful subjects who appeal to her, entitles her justly to the name you give her, 'an angel of goodness.' Let my sentiments be known to Madame Bonaparte. You will not surprise her, but I flatter myself that her soul will rejoice to know them." *

The Count de Lille was not deceived. Josephine's heart was filled with joy at this confidence of the "King of France;" she was pleased that the Marquis de Clermont had fulfilled his wishes, and that he should with this letter have sent her a present. She read it with a countenance full of enthusiasm, and with a tremulous voice, to her daughter Hortense, whom she had educated to be as good a

* Thibaudeau, "Histoire de la France, et de Napoléon Bonaparte," vol. ii., p. 202.

royalist as herself; and both mother and daughter besieged, with earnest petitions, with tears and prayers, and every expression of love, the first consul to realize the hopes of the Count de Lille, and to recall the exiled prince to his kingdom.

Bonaparte usually replied to all these requests with a silent smile; sometimes also, when they were too violent and pressing, he repelled them with unwilling vehemence.

"These women belong entirely to the devil!" said he, in his anger to Bourrienne, "they are mad for royalty. The *Faubourg St. Germain* has turned their heads, they are made the protecting genii of the royalists; but they do not trouble me, and I am not displeased with them."

Bourrienne ventured to warn Josephine, and to call her attention to this, that she might not so strongly plead before Bonaparte for the Count de Lille, but Josephine answered him with a sad smile: "I wish I could persuade him to call back the king, lest he himself may have the idea of becoming such; for the fear that he may do this always awakens in me a foreboding of evil, which I cannot banish from my mind." *

But until the king was really recalled by the first consul, Josephine had to be pleased to assume the place of queen in the Tuileries, and to accept the homage which France and soon all Europe brought to her. For now that the republic was firmly established, and had made peace with the foreign powers, they sent their ambassadors to the republic, and were received in the name of France by the first consul and his wife.

It was indeed an important and significant moment when Josephine for the first time in her apartments received the ambassadors of the foreign powers. It is true no one called this "to give audience;" no one spoke yet in

* Bourrienne, vol. iv., p. 108.

genuine courtier's style of "great levee" or "little levee;" the appellation of "madame" was yet in use, and there was no court-marshal, no maids of honor, no chamberlains of the palace. But the substance was the same, and, instead of the high court-marshal, it was Talleyrand, the secretary for foreign affairs, who introduced to Josephine the ambassadors, and who called their names.

This introduction of the ambassadors was the first grand ceremony which, since the revolution, had taken place in the Tuileries. With exquisite tact, Josephine had carefully avoided at this festivity any pomp, any luxury of toilet. In a plain white muslin dress, her beautiful brown hair bound up in a string of white pearls, and holding Talleyrand's hand, she entered the great reception hall, in which the foreign ambassadors, the generals, and the high dignitaries of the republic were gathered. She came without pretension or ostentation, but at her appearance a murmur of admiration ran through the company, and brought on her cheeks the timid blush of a young maiden. With the assurance of an accomplished lady of the world she received the salutations of the ambassadors, knew how to speak to each a gracious word, how to entertain them, not with those worn-out, stereotyped phrases customary at royal presentations, but in an interesting, intellectual manner, which at once opened the way to an exciting, witty, and unaffected conversation.

Every one was enchanted with her, and from this day not only the French aristocracy, but all distinguished foreigners who came to Paris, were anxious to obtain the honor of a reception in the drawing-room of the wife of the first consul; from this day Josephine was the admiration of Europe, as she had already been that of France and Italy. As the wife of the first consul of France she could be observed and noticed by all Europe, and it is certainly a most remarkable and unheard-of circumstance that of all these thousands

of eyes directed at her, none could find in her a stain or blemish; that, though neither beautiful nor young, her sweet disposition and grace so enchanted every one as to be accepted as substitutes for them, while on account of her goodness and generosity her very failings and weaknesses were overlooked, being interwoven with so many virtues.

Constant, the first chamberlain of Bonaparte, who, at the time Bonaparte was elected first consul, entered his service, describes Josephine's appearance and character in the following manner:

"Napoleon's wife was of medium size; her figure was moulded with rare perfection; her movements had a softness and an elasticity which gave to her walk something ethereal, without diminishing the majesty of a sovereign. Her very expressive physiognomy mirrored all the emotions of her soul without losing aught of the enchanting gentleness which was the very substance of her character. At the moment of joy or merriment she was beautiful to behold. Never did a woman more than she justify the expression that the eyes were the mirror of the soul. Hers were of a deep-blue color, shadowed by long, slightly-curved lids, and overarched by the most beautiful eyebrows in the world, and her simple look attracted you toward her as if by an irresistible power. It was difficult for Josephine to give to this bewitching look an appearance of severity, yet she knew how to make it imposing when she chose. Her hair was beautiful, long, and soft; its light-brown color agreed marvellously well with her complexion, which was a mixture of delicacy and freshness. At the dawn of her lofty power the empress was fond of putting on for a headdress a red Madras, which gave her the piquant appearance of a creole. But what more than any thing else contributed to the charm which invested her whole person was the sweet tone of her voice. How often it has happened to me and to many others amid our occupations, as soon as this voice

was heard, to remain still for the sake of enjoying the pleasure of hearing it! It might be said, perhaps, that the empress was not a beautiful woman; but her countenance, so full of expression and goodness, the angelic grace which was shed over her whole person, placed her among the most charming women of the world."

Further on, speaking of her character, he continues:

"Goodness was as inseparable from her character as grace from her person. Good even to weakness, sensitive beyond all expression, generous to extravagance, she was the delight of all those who were round about her; certain it is that there never was a woman more loved and more deservedly loved by those who approached her than Josephine. As she had known what adversity was, she was full of compassion for the sorrows of others; with a pleasant, equable temperament, full of condescension alike to foe and friend, she carried peace wherever discord or disunion existed; if the emperor was displeased with his brothers, or with any other person, she uttered words of affection, and soon restored harmony. She possessed a wondrous tact, a rare sentiment of what was becoming, and the soundest and most unerring judgment one can possibly imagine. Besides all this, Josephine had a remarkable memory, to which the emperor would often appeal. She was a good reader, and had a peculiar charm of her own which accorded with all her movements. Napoleon preferred her to all his other readers." *

The Duke de Rovigo, the Duchess d'Abrantes, Mdlle. Ducrest, the niece of the Countess de Genlis, Mdlle. d'Avrillon, General Lafayette, in a word, all who have written about that period who knew Josephine, bear similar testimony to her amiable disposition and her superior virtues.

In the same manner the man for whom, as Mdlle. Du-

* Constant, "Mémoires," vol. i., pp. 21, 39; vol. ii., p. 70.

crest says, "she would gladly have given her life," Napoleon, in his conversations with his confidential friends at St. Helena, ever spoke of her. "In all positions of life, Josephine's demeanor and actions were always pleasant or bewitching," said he. "It would have been impossible ever to surprise her, however intrusive you might be, so as to produce a disagreeable impression. I always found her in the same humor; she had the same amiable complacency; she was good, gentle, and ever devoted to her husband in true affection. He never saw her in bad humor; she was always constantly busy in endeavoring to please him." *

And she pleased him more than any other woman; he loved her in these happy days of the consulate with all the affection of the first days of his marriage; his heart might now and then be drawn aside from her to other women, but it always returned true and loving to her.

And this woman, whom the future King of France called an "angel of goodness," and the future Emperor of France, "grace in person," is the one who entered the Tuileries at Bonaparte's side to bring again into France the tone of good society, refinement of manners, intellectual conversation, and a love for the arts and sciences.

She was fully conscious of this mission, and devoted herself with all the strength, energy, and perseverance of her character. Her drawing-room soon became the central rendezvous of men of science, art, learning, politics, and diplomacy, and to each Josephine knew how to address friendly and captivating words; she knew how to encourage every one by her noble affability, by her respectful interest in their works and plans—so much so that all strove to do as well as possible, and in her presence appeared more amiable than they otherwise would perhaps have been. Alongside of the distinguished men of every rank were seen the

* "Mémorial de Ste. Hélène," vol. i., pp. 38, 79.

choicest company of ladies, young, beautiful, and captivating; the most intelligent women of the *Faubourg St. Germain* were not ashamed to appear in the drawing-room of the wife of the first consul, and thought that the glory of their old aristocratic names would not be tarnished by association with Madame Bonaparte, who by birth belonged to them, and formed a sort of connecting link between the departed royalty of the last century and the republicans of the present.

This republicanism was soon to hide itself behind the columns and mirrors of the large hall of reception in the Tuileries. Bonaparte—the first consul, and shortly to be consul for life—would have nothing to do with this republicanism, which reminded him of the days of terrorism, anarchy, and the guillotine; and the words "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," which the revolution had written over the portals of the Tuileries, were obliterated by the consul of the republic. France had been sufficiently bled, and had suffered enough for these three words; it was now to rest under the shadow of legal order and of severe discipline, after its golden morning-dream of youth's enchanting hopes.

Bonaparte was to re-establish order and law; Josephine was to remodel society and the saloon; her mission was to unite the aristocracy of ancient France with the parvenues of the new; she was to be to the latter a teacher of refinement, and of the genuine manners and habits of so-called good society.

To accomplish this, the wife of the first consul needed the assistance of some ladies of those circles who had remained in lofty, haughty isolation; she needed the cooperation of the ladies of the *Faubourg St. Germain.* It is true they made their morning calls, and invited the former Viscountess de Beauharnais, with her daughter, to their evening receptions; but they carefully avoided being pres-

ent at the evening circles of Madame Bonaparte, where their exclusiveness was beset with the danger of coming in contact with some "parvenu," or with some sprig of the army, or of the financial bureaus. Josephine therefore had to recruit her troops herself in the *Faubourg St. Germain*, so as to bring into her saloon the necessary contingent of the old legitimist aristocracy, and she found what she desired in a lady with whom she had been acquainted as Viscountess de Beauharnais, and who then had ever shown herself kind and friendly. This lady was the Countess de Montesson, the morganatic wife of the Duke d'Orleans, the father of the Duke Philippe Egalité, who, after betraying the monarchy to the revolution, was betrayed by the revolution, and, like his royal relatives, Louis and Marie Antoinette, had perished on the scaffold!

Soon after his entrance into the Tuileries, the first consul invited, through his wife, the Countess de Montesson to visit him, and when she was announced he advanced to meet her with an unusual expression of friendship, and endeavored with great condescension to make her say in what manner he could please her or be of service to her.

"General," said Madame de Montesson, much surprised, "I have no right whatever to claim any thing from you."

Bonaparte smiled. "You are mistaken," said he; "I have been under many obligations to you for a long time past. Do you not know that to you I am indebted for my first laurels? You came with the Duke d'Orleans to Brienne for the purpose of distributing the prizes at the great examination, and when you placed on my head the laurel-crown, which has since been followed by others, you said, 'May it bring you happiness!' It is commonly believed that I am a fatalist; it is therefore very natural that I should not have forgotten my first coronation, and that it is still fresh in my memory. It would afford me much

pleasure to be of service to you; besides, you can be useful to me. The tone of good society has nearly perished in France; we would like to renew it again with your assistance. I need some of the traditions of days gone by—you can assist my wife with them; and when a distinguished foreigner comes to Paris you can give him a reception which will convince him that nowhere else can so much gentleness and amiableness be found." *

That Madame de Montesson might have a striking proof of Bonaparte's good-will, he renewed her yearly pension of one hundred and eighty thousand francs, which the duke had donated to her in his will, and which Bonaparte restored to her as the property which the revolution had confiscated for the nation's welfare. She manifested her gratitude to the first consul for this liberal pension by opening the saloons to the "parvenues of the Tuileries;" and leading the aristocrats of the *Faubourg St. Germain* into the drawing-rooms of Josephine, and then assisting her to form out of these elements a court whose lofty and brilliant centre was to be Josephine herself. The ladies of the *Faubourg St. Germain* were no longer ashamed to appear at the new court of the Tuileries, but excused themselves by saying: "We flatter Josephine, so as to keep her on our side, and to strengthen her loyalty to the king. She will, by her entrancing eloquence, persuade the consul to recall our King Louis XVIII., and give him his crown."

But too soon, alas! were they made aware of their error. It was not long before they became convinced that, if Bonaparte's hands were busy in raising a throne, in lifting up from the earth the fallen crown of royalty, he was not doing this to place it on the brow of the Count de Lille; he had a nearer object in view—he considered his own head better suited to wear it.

* "Mémoires de Mdlle. Ducrest," vol. i., p. 9.

The conqueror of terrorism and of the revolution was not inclined to be defeated by the enemies of the republic, who were approaching the frontiers of France, to restore the Bourbons. He took up the glove which Austria had thrown down—for she had made alliance with England.

On the 6th of May, 1800, Bonaparte left Paris, marched with his army over Mount St. Bernard, and assumed the chief command of the army in Italy, which recently had suffered so many disastrous defeats from Suwarrow and the Archduke Charles.

At Marengo, on the 14th of June, Bonaparte obtained a brilliant triumph. Soon after, at Hohenlinden, Moreau also defeated the Austrians. These two decisive victories forced Austria to make peace with France, to abandon her alliance with England—that is to say, with the monarchical principles; and, at the peace ratified in the beginning of the year 1801 at Luneville, to concede to France the grand-duchy of Tuscany.

In July, Bonaparte returned in triumph to France, and was received by the people with enthusiastic acclamations. Paris was brilliantly illuminated on the day of his return, and round about the Tuileries arose the shouts of the people, who with applauding voices demanded to see the conqueror of Marengo, and would not remain quiet until he appeared on the balcony. Even Bonaparte was touched by this enthusiasm of the French people; as he retreated from the balcony and retired into his cabinet, he said to Bourrienne. "Listen! The people shout again and again; they still send their acclamations toward me. I love those sounds; they are nearly as sweet as Josephine's voice. How proud and happy I am to be loved by such a people!" *

* Bourrienne, vol. v., p. 35.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE INFERNAL MACHINE.

THE victory of Marengo, which had pleased the people, had filled the royalists with terror and fear, and destroyed their hopes of a speedy restoration of the monarchy, making them conscious of its fruitless pretensions. With the frenzy of hatred and the bitterness of revenge they turned against the first consul, who was not now their expected savior of the monarchy, but a usurper who wanted to gain France for himself.

The royalists and the republicans united for the same object. Both parties longed to destroy Bonaparte: the one to re-establish the republic of the year 1793, and the other the throne of the Bourbons. Everywhere conspiracies and secret associations were organized, and the watchful and active police discovered in a few months more than ten plots, the aim of which was to murder Bonaparte.

Josephine heard this with sorrow and fear, with tears of anxiety and love. She had now given her whole heart and soul to Bonaparte, and it was the torment of martyrdom to see him every day threatened by assassins and by invisible foes, who from dark and hidden places drew their daggers at him. Her love surrounded him with vigilant friends and servants, who sought to discover every danger and to remove it from his path.

When he was coming to Malmaison, Josephine before his arrival would send her servants to search every hiding-place in the park, to see if in some shady grove a murderer might not be secreted; she entreated Junot or Murat to send scouts from Paris on the road to Malmaison to remove all suspicious persons from it. Yet her heart trembled with anxiety when she knew him to be on the way, and, when he had safely arrived, she would receive him with

rapture, as if he had just escaped an imminent danger, and would make him laugh by the exclamations of joy with which she greeted him as one saved from danger.

In the anxiety of her watchful love she made herself acquainted with all the details of the discovered conspiracies of both the Jacobins and royalists. She knew there were two permanent conspiracies at work, though their leaders had been discovered and led into prison.

One of these conspiracies had been organized by the old Jacobins, the republicans of the Convention; and these bands of the "enraged," as they called themselves, numbered in their ranks all the enemies of constitutional order, all the men of the revolution of 1789; and all these men had sworn with solemn oaths to kill Bonaparte, and to deliver the republic from her greatest and most dangerous enemy.

The other conspiracy, which had its ramifications throughout France, was formed by the royalists. "The Society of the White Mantle" was mostly composed of Chouans, daring men of Vendée, who were ever ready to sacrifice their lives to the mere notion of royalty, and who like the Jacobins had sworn to murder Bonaparte.

Chevalier, who, with his ingenious infernal machine, sought to kill Bonaparte on his way to Malmaison, belonged to the Society of the White Mantle. But he was betrayed by his confidant and associate Becyer, who assisted the police to arrest him. To the conspiracy of the "enraged" belonged the Italians Ceracchi, Arena, and Diana, who at the opera, when the consul appeared in his *loge*, and was greeted by the acclamations of the people, were ready to fire their pistols at him. But at the moment they were about to commit the deed from behind the side-scenes, where they had hidden themselves, they were seized, arrested, and led to prison by the police. Josephine, as already said, knew all these conspiracies; she trembled for Bona-

parte's life, and yet she could not prevent him from appearing in public, and she herself, smiling and apparently unsuspecting, had to appear at Bonaparte's side at the grand parades, in the national festivities, and at the theatrical performances; no feature on her face was to betray the anxiety she was enduring.

One day, however, not only Bonaparte's life but also that of Josephine, was imperilled by the conspirators; the famous infernal machine which had been placed on their way to the opera, would have killed the first consul and his wife, if a red Persian shawl had not saved them both.

At the grand opera, that evening, was to be performed Joseph Haydn's masterpiece, "The Creation." The Parisians awaited this performance with great expectation; they rushed to the opera, not only to hear the oratorio, the fame of which had spread from Vienna to Paris, but also to see Bonaparte and his wife, who it was known would attend the performance.

Josephine had requested Bonaparte to be present at this great musical event, for she knew that the public would be delighted at his presence. He at first manifested no desire to do so, for he was not sufficiently versed in musical matters for it to afford him much enjoyment; and besides, there was but one kind of music he liked, and that was the Italian, the richness of whose melody pleased him, while the German and French left him dissatisfied and weary. However, Bonaparte gave way to the entreaties of Josephine, and resolved to drive to the opera. The dinner that day had been somewhat later than usual, for besides Josephine, her children, and Bonaparte's sister Caroline, Murat, the Generals Bessières and Lannes, as well as Bonaparte's two adjutants, Lebrun and Rapp, had been present. Immediately after dinner they wanted to drive to the opera; but as Josephine lingered behind, busy with the arrangement of her shawl, Bonaparte declared he would drive in

advance with the two Generals Bessières and Lebrun, while Rapp was to accompany the ladies in the second carriage. With his usual rapidity of action he seized his hat and sword, and, followed by his companions, left the room to go to the carriage, which was waiting.

Josephine, who imagined that Bonaparte was waiting for her at the carriage, hurriedly put on, without troubling herself any longer about the becoming arrangement of the folds, a red Persian shawl, which Bonaparte had sent her as a present from Egypt. She was going to leave, when Rapp, with the openness of a soldier, made the remark that she had not put on her shawl to-day with her accustomed elegance. She smiled, and begged him to arrange it after the fashion of Egyptian ladies. Rapp laughingly hastened to comply with her wishes; and while Josephine, Madame Murat, and Hortense, watched attentively the arrangement of the shawl in the hands of Rapp, Bonaparte's carriage was heard moving away.

This noise put a speedy end to all further movements, and Josephine, with the ladies and Rapp, hastened to follow Bonaparte. Their carriage had no sooner reached the *Place de Carrousel*, than an appalling explosion was heard, and a bright flame like a lightning-flash filled the whole place with its glare; at the same moment the windows of the carriage were broken into fragments, which flew in every direction into the carriage, and one of which penetrated so deep into the arm of Hortense, that the blood gushed out. Josephine uttered a cry of horror—"Bonaparte is murdered!" At the same moment were heard loud shrieks and groans.

Rapp, seized with fear, and only thinking that Bonaparte was in danger, sprang out of the carriage, and, careless of the wounded and bleeding, who lay near, ran onward to the opera to find out if Bonaparte had safely reached there. While the ladies, in mortal agony, remained on the

Place de Carrousel, not knowing whether to return to the Tuileries or to drive forward, a messenger arrived at full speed to announce that the first consul had not been hurt, and that he was waiting for his wife in his *loge*, and begged her to come without delay. Meanwhile Rapp had reached the opera, and had penetrated into the box of the first consul. Bonaparte was seated calmly and unmoved in his accustomed place, examining the audience through his glass, and now and then addressing a few words to the secretary of police, Fouché, who stood near him. No sooner did Bonaparte see Rapp, than he said hastily, and in a low voice—"Josephine?"

At that moment she entered, followed by Madame Murat and Hortense. Bonaparte saluted them with a smile, and with a look of unfathomable love he extended his hand to Josephine. She was still pale and trembling, although she had no conception of the greatness of the danger which had menaced her.

Bonaparte endeavored to quiet her by stating that the explosion was probably the result of some accident or imprudence; but at this moment the prefect of the police entered who had been on the spot, and had come to give a report of the dreadful effects of the explosion. Fifteen persons had been killed, more than thirty had been severely wounded, and about forty houses seriously damaged. This was all the work of a so-called infernal machine—a small barrel filled with powder and quicksilver—which had been placed in a little carriage at the entrance of the *Rue St. Nicaise.*

Until now Josephine did not realize the extent of the danger which had threatened her and her husband. Had the explosion taken place a few moments before, it would have killed the consul; if it had been one minute later, Josephine and her companions would have been involved in the catastrophe. It was the shawl which Rapp was arrang-

ing on her shoulders according to the rules of art, which caused them to retard their departure, and thus saved her life.

An inexpressible horror now seized her and made her tremble; her looks, full of love and deep anguish, were fixed on Bonaparte, who, in a low voice, entreated her to compose herself, and not to make her distress public. Near Josephine sat Hortense, pale and agitated, like her mother; around her wounded arm was wrapped a handkerchief, stained here and there with blood. Madame Murat was quiet and composed, like Bonaparte, who was then giving instructions to the prefect of police to provide immediate assistance for the unfortunate persons who had been wounded.

No one yet in the audience knew the appalling event. The thundering noise had been heard, but it was presumed to have been an artillery salute, and no evil was suspected, for Bonaparte, with his usual guards, had entered his box, and, advancing to its very edge, had saluted the public in a friendly way. This act of the first consul had its ordinary effect: the audience, indifferent to the music, rose and saluted their hero with loud acclamation and applause. Not till Josephine entered the *loge* had the acclamations subsided, and the music begun again. A few minutes after, the news of the fearful event spread all over the house: a murmur arose, and the music was interrupted anew.

The Duchess d'Abrantes, who was present at this scene, gives a faithful, eloquent, and graphic picture of it:

"A vague noise," says she, "began to spread from the parterre to the orchestra, and from the amphitheatre to the boxes. Soon the news of the occurrence was known all over the house, when, like a sudden clap of thunder, an acclamation burst forth, and the whole audience, with a single undivided look of love, seemed to desire to embrace Bonaparte. What I am narrating I have seen, and I am not

the only one who saw it. . . . What excitement followed this first explosion of national anger, which at this moment was represented by the audience, whose horror at the dark plot cannot be described with words! Women were seen weeping and sobbing; men, pale as death, trembled with vengeance and anger, whatever might have been the political standard which they followed; all hearts and hands were united to prove that difference of opinion creates no difference in the interpretation of the code of honor. During the whole scene my eyes were fixed on the *loge* of the consul. He was quiet, and only seemed moved when public sentiment gave utterance to strong expressive words about the conspiracy, and these reached him. Madame Bonaparte was not fully composed. Her countenance was disturbed; even her attitude, generally so very graceful, was no longer under her control. She seemed to tremble under her shawl as under a protecting canopy, and in fact it was this shawl which had saved her from destruction. She was weeping; however much she endeavored to compose herself, she could not repress her tears; they would flow, against her will, down her pale cheeks, and, whenever Josephine fixed her eyes upon her husband, she trembled again. Even her daughter seemed extremely agitated, and Madame Murat alone preserved the family character, and seemed entirely herself." *

At last, when the public excitement was somewhat abated, and the music was again resumed, the audience turned its attention to Hadyn's masterpiece. But Josephine had not the strength to bear this effort, and to submit to it quietly. She entreated her husband to retire with her and the ladies; and when at last he acceded to her request, and had quietly left the *loge* with her, Josephine sat by him in the carriage, opposite Caroline and Hortense, and, sobbing, threw herself on Bonaparte's breast, and cried out in her anguish:

* Duchess d'Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. ii., p. 66.

"What a life, where I must ever be trembling for you!"

The infernal machine did not kill the first consul, but it gave to liberty and to the republic a fatal blow; it scattered into fragments what remained of the revolutionary institutions from the days of blood and terror. France rose up in disgust and horror against the party which made of assassins its companions, and consequently this conspiracy failed to accomplish what its originators had expected. They wanted to destroy Bonaparte and ruin his power, but this abortive attempt only increased his popularity, enlarged his power, and deepened the people's love for him who now appeared to them as a protecting rampart, and a barrier to the flood of anarchy.

France gave herself up trembling, and without a will of her own, into the hands of the hero to whom she was indebted for fame and recognition by foreign powers, and through whom she hoped to secure domestic peace. France longed for a strong arm to support her; Bonaparte gave her this arm, but it not only supported France, it bowed her down; and from this day he placed the reins on the wild republican steed, and let it feel that it had found a master who had the power and the will to direct it entirely in accordance with his wishes.

Bonaparte was determined to put an end to the seditions and conspiracies of the republicans, whom he hated because they had for their aim the downfall of all legitimate authority; and in turn was hated by them because he had abandoned their standard and turned against the republic with the faithlessness of a son who attacks the mother that gave him birth. Bonaparte maintained that it was the republicans who had set the infernal machine on his path, and paid no attention to the opinion of Fouché, who ascribed to the royalists the origin of the plot. Bonaparte wished first to do away with his most violent and bitter enemies, the republicans of the year 1789; he desired to possess the

power of punishing such, and to render them harmless, and now the horror produced by this criminal act came to his assistance in carrying out this plan.

The council of the state adopted the legislative enactment that the consuls should have "the power to remove from Paris those persons whose presence they considered dangerous to the public security, and that all such persons who should leave their place of banishment should be transported from the country!"

Under this law, George Cadoudal, Chevalier, Arena, Ceracchi, and many others were executed; and one hundred and thirty persons, whose only crime was that of being suspected of dissatisfaction toward the administration of the consuls, and considered as Bonaparte's enemies, were transported to Cayenne.

Such were for France the results of this infernal machine, the object of which was to assassinate the Consul Bonaparte, instead of which it had only the effect of destroying his enemies and strengthening his power.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CASHMERES AND THE LETTER.

As mighty events always exercise an influence on minor ones, so this fearful attempt at murder became the occasion for the introduction into France of a new branch of industry, which had hitherto drawn millions from Europe to the East.

Josephine, gratefully remembering her truly wonderful deliverance through the means of her Persian shawl, wore it afterward in preference to any other. Until then she had never fancied it, for when Bonaparte sent it to her from

Egypt, she wrote to him: "I have received the shawl. It may be very beautiful and very costly, but I find it unsightly. Its great advantage consists in its lightness. I doubt, however, if this new fashion will meet with approbation. Notwithstanding, I am pleased with it, for it is rare and warm." *

But after it had saved her life, she no longer thought it unsightly, she was fond of wrapping herself up in it, and the natural consequence was, that these Persian shawls soon formed the most fashionable and costly article of apparel.

Every lady of the higher classes considered it a necessity to cover her tender shoulders with this valuable foreign material, and it soon became "*comme il faut*," a duty of position, to possess a collection of such Persian shawls, and to wear them at the balls and receptions in the Tuileries.

The desire to possess such a precious article of fashion led these ladies oftentimes to "*corriger la fortune*," and to obtain, by some bold but not very creditable act, possession of such a shawl, which had now become in a certain measure the escutcheon of the new French aristocracy.

The Duchess d'Abrantes, in reference to this matter, relates two thefts which at that time troubled the aristocratic society of the Tuileries, which prove that the ladies had taken instructions from the gentlemen, and that dishonest persons of both sexes were admitted into the society of heroes and their beautiful wives!

At a morning reception in the Tuileries, the shawl of the Countess de St. Martin had been stolen; and this lady was very much distressed at the loss, for this cashmere was not only a present from Madame Murat, but was one of uncommon beauty, on account of the rarity of the design, consisting of paroquets in artistic groups, instead of the

* "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice," par Mademoiselle Ducrest, vol. iii., p. 227.

ordinary palm. The countess was therefore untiring in recounting to every one her irreparable loss, and uttered bitter curses against the bold female who had stolen her treasure.

"A few weeks later," relates the duchess, "at a ball given by the minister Talleyrand, the countess came toward me with a bright countenance and told me that she had just now found her shawl, and, strange to say, upon the shoulders of a young lady at the ball!

"'But,' said I to her, 'you will not accuse this lady before the whole company!'

"'And why not?'

"'Because that would be wrong. Leave this matter to me.'

"She would not at first, but I pressed the subject on her consideration, and she agreed at length to remain somewhat behind, while I approached the young lady, who stood near the door, and was just going to leave the ballroom. I told her in a low voice that in all probability she had made a mistake; that she had perhaps mislaid her own cashmere, and had through carelessness taken the shawl of the Countess de St. Martin.

"I was as polite as I could possibly be in such a communication; but the young lady looked at me unpleasantly for such an impertinent intrusion, and replied that 'since the time the Countess de St. Martin had deafened the ears of every one with the story of her stolen shawl, she had had ample leisure to recognize as her property the cashmere she wore.' Her mother, who stood a few steps from her, and was conversing with another lady, turned toward her when she heard her daughter speak in so loud a voice. But the Countess de St. Martin, who had overheard that she 'had deafened the ears of every one with the story of her stolen shawl,' rushed in to the rescue of her case.

"'This cashmere belongs to me,' said she, haughtily—

seizing, at the same time, the shawl with one hand, while the young lady with her fist thrust her back violently. I saw that in a moment they would come to blows.

"'It will be easy to end this difficulty,' said I to the Countess de St. Martin. 'Madame will be kind enough to tell us where she has purchased this shawl which is so much like yours, and then you will see your mistake, and be satisfied.'

"'It does not suit me to tell where I got this shawl,' replied the lady, looking at me contemptuously; 'there is no necessity for my telling you where I purchased it.'

"'Well, then,' exclaimed eagerly the Countess de St. Martin, 'you confess, madame, that the shawl really belongs to you?'

"The other answered with a sarcastic smile, and drew the shawl closer to her shoulders. A few persons, attracted by the strangeness of such a scene, had gathered around us, and seemed to wait for the end of so extraordinary an event.

"The countess continued with a loud voice:

"'Well, then, madame, since the shawl belongs to you, you can explain to me why the name of Christine, which is my first name, is embroidered in red silk on the small edging. Madame Junot will be kind enough to look for this name.'

"The young woman became pale as death. I shall never during my life forget the despairing look which she gave me, as with trembling hand she passed me the shawl, just as her father appeared from a room near the place of the scene. I took the cashmere with an unsteady hand, and sought reluctantly for the name of Christine, for I trusted she would at least have taken it out; but the deathly paleness of the guilty one told the contrary, and in fact I had no sooner unfolded the shawl, than the name appeared, embroidered at the narrow edging.

"'Ah!' at last exclaimed the countess, in a triumphant tone, 'I have—' but as she raised her eyes to the young woman, she was touched by her despairing look. 'Well, then,' cried she, 'this is one of those mistakes which so often happen. To-morrow I will return your cashmere.—We have exchanged cashmeres,' said she, turning to the young lady's father, who, surprised at seeing her naked shoulders, gazed at his daughter, not understanding the matter. 'You will have the goodness to send me my shawl to-morrow,' added she, noticing how the young woman trembled.

"We returned into the ballroom, and the next day the young lady sent to the Countess de St. Martin her precious shawl.

"Something similar to this happened at the same time to Madame Hamelin. She was at a ball; when rising from her seat to join in a contra-dance, she left there a very beautiful black shawl; when she returned, her shawl was no longer there, but she saw it on the shoulders of a well-known and distinguished lady. Approaching her, she said:

"'Madame, you have my shawl!'

"'Not at all, madame!'

"'But, madame, this is my shawl, and, as an evidence, I can state the number of its palms—it has exactly thirteen, a very unusual number!'

"'My shawl has also, by chance, precisely thirteen palms.'

"'But,' said Madame Hamelin, 'I have torn it since I came here. You can see where it is torn, and by that means I recognize my shawl.'

"'Ah, my goodness! my shawl has also been torn; that is precisely why I bought it, for I obtained it on that account somewhat cheaper.'

"It is useless to dispute with a person who is determined to follow Basil's receipt, that 'what is worth taking

is worth keeping.' Madame Hamelin lost her shawl, and had, as a sole consolation, the petty vengeance of relating to everybody how it was taken, and of pointing out the thief, who was in the meanwhile perfectly shameless." *

No one, however, had a larger and more choice selection of these cashmere shawls than Josephine. Mdlle. Ducrest relates that the deceased empress had more than one hundred and fifty of the most magnificent and costly cashmere shawls. She had sent to Constantinople patterns from which she had them made there, as pleasing to the eye as they were costly and precious. Every week M. Lenormant, the first man-milliner in Paris, came to Navarra, the country residence of the empress, and brought his most beautiful shawls for her selection. The empress possessed several (having a white ground covered with roses, violets, paroquets, peacocks, and other objects of beauty hitherto unknown in France) each of which cost from fifteen to twenty thousand francs.

The empress went so far in her passion for cashmeres as to have dresses made of the same material. One day she had put on one of these dresses, which was so beautiful, that some gentlemen invited to dinner could not withhold their admiration. One of them, Count Pourtales, thought that this splendid material would be well adapted for a gentleman's vest. Josephine, in her large-heartedness, had a pair of scissors brought; she then cut her dress into several pieces sufficiently large for a vest, and divided them among the gentlemen present, so that only the bodice of the dress remained, with a small piece around the waist. But this improvised spencer over the white richly-embroidered under-dress, was so exceedingly becoming to the empress, and brought out so exquisitely her beautiful bust, and slender graceful waist, that it would have been easy to

* Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. ix., pp. 70–76.

consider as a piece of coquetry what was simply Josephine's spontaneous generosity.*

Josephine, however, did not so assiduously attend to her cashmere shawls as to forget the unfortunate victims of the infernal machine. On the contrary, she saw with deep pain how every one was busy in inculpating others, and in casting suspicions on royalists and Jacobins, so as to give a pretext to punish them. She noticed that all those who wished to gain the consul's favor were zealous in spying out fresh culprits, for it was well known that Bonaparte was inclined to make of all hostile parties a terrible example, so that, through the severity of the punishment and the number of the punished, he might deter the dissatisfied from any further plots.

Josephine's compassionate heart was distressed, through sympathy for so many unfortunate persons, whom wicked men maliciously were endeavoring to drag into guilt, so as to have them punished; and the injustice which the judges manifested at every hearing filled her with anger and horror. Ever ready to help the needy, and to protect the persecuted, she addressed herself to Fouché, the minister of police, and requested him to use mildness and compassion. She wrote to him:

"Citizen minister, while trembling at the frightful calamity which has taken place, I feel uneasy and pained at the fear of the punishments which hang over the poor creatures who, I am told, belong to families with which I have been connected in days past. I shall therefore be appealed to by mothers, sisters, and despairing wives; my heart will be lacerated by the sad consciousness that I cannot obtain pardon for all those who implore it.

"The generosity of the consul is great, his affection for me is boundless, I know it well; but the crime is of so

* Mademoiselle Ducrest.

awful a nature that he will deem it necessary to make an example of extreme severity. The supreme magistrate was not alone exposed to danger—many others were killed and wounded by this sad event, and it is this which will make the consul severe and implacable.

"I conjure you, then, citizen minister, to avoid extending your researches too far, and not always to spy out new persons who might be compromised by this horrible machine. Must France, which has been held in terror by so many executions, have to sigh over new victims? Is it not much more important to appease the minds of the people than to excite them by new terrors? Finally, would it not be advisable, so soon as the originators of this awful crime are captured, to have compassion and mercy upon subordinate persons who may have been entangled in it through dangerous sophisms and fanatical sentiments?

"Barely vested with the supreme authority, ought not the first consul study to win the hearts rather than to make slaves of his people? Moderate, therefore, by your advice, where in his first excitement he may be too severe. To punish is, alas, too often necessary! To pardon is, I trust, still more. In a word, be a protector to the unfortunate who, through their confession or repentance, have already made in part penance for their guilt.

"As I myself, without any fault on my part, nearly lost my life in the revolution, you can easily understand that I take an interest in those who can perhaps be saved without thereby endangering my husband's life, which is so precious to me and to France. I therefore earnestly desire that you will make a distinction between the leaders of this conspiracy and those who, from fear or weakness, have been seduced into bringing upon themselves a portion of the guilt. As a woman, a wife, a mother, I can readily feel for all the heart-rending agonies of those families which appeal to me.

"Do what you possibly can, citizen minister, to diminish their numbers; you will thereby spare me much anxiety. I can never be deaf to the cries of distress from the needy; but in this matter you can do a great deal more than I can, and therefore pardon what may seem strange in my pleadings with you.

"Believe in my gratitude and loyalty of sentiment.

"JOSEPHINE." *

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MALMAISON.

IN the Tuileries the first consul, with his wife, resided in all the pomp and dignity of his new office. There he was the sovereign, the commander; there he ruled, and, like a king, all bowed to him; the people humbled themselves and recognized him as their master.

In the Tuileries etiquette and the stiff pomp of a princely court prevailed more and more. Bonaparte required of his wife that she should there represent the dignity and the grandeur of her new position; that she should appear as the first, the most exalted, and the most unapproachable of women. In the Tuileries there were no more evenings of pleasant social gatherings, of joyous conversation with friends whom affection made equals, and who, in love and admiration, recognizing Bonaparte's ascendency, brought him of their own free choice their esteem and high consideration. Now, it was all honor and duty; now, the friends of the past were servants who, for duty's sake, had to be subservient to their master, and abide by the rules of etiquette, otherwise the frown on their lofty ruler's brow would bring them back within their bounds.

* Ducrest, "Mémoires," vol. iii., p. 231.

Josephine was pained at these limits set to her personal freedom—at these claims of etiquette, which did not permit her friends to remain at her side, but strove to exalt above them the wife of the first consul. Her sense of modesty ever accepted the pleasant, genial household affections as more agreeable and more precious than the burdensome representations, levees, and the tediousness of ceremonial receptions; her sense of modesty longed for the quiet and repose of retirement, and she was happy when, at the close of the court festivities, she could return to Malmaison, there to enjoy the coming of spring, the blossoming of summer, and the glorious beauty of autumn with its manifold colors.

In Malmaison were centered all her joys and pleasures. There she could satisfy all the inclinations of her heart, all the fancies of her imagination, all the wants of her mind; there she could be the tender wife and mother, and the faithful friend; there she could receive, without the annoyance of etiquette, men of learning and art; there she could cultivate the soil and devote herself to botany, her favorite study, and to her flowers, the dearest and most faithful friends of her whole life.

Josephine sought for and found in Malmaison her earthly paradise; there she was happy, and the care and the secret anguish which in Paris wove around her heart its network, and every now and then whispered the nefarious words of divorce and separation, followed her not in the beautiful and friendly Malmaison; she left all this in Paris with the stiff Madame Etiquette, who once in the Tuileries had poisoned the existence of the Queen Marie Antoinette, and now sought to intrude herself upon the consulate as an ill-tempered sovereign.

But in Malmaison there was no etiquette, none of the dignified coldness of court-life. There you were allowed to laugh, to jest, and to be happy. In Malmaison the first

consul laid aside his gravity; there his gloomy brow brightened, and he became again General Bonaparte, the lover of his Josephine, the confidential companion of his friends, the harmless individual, who seemed to have nothing to require from Heaven but the happiness of the passing hour, and who could laugh at a joke with the same guilelessness as any other child of the people who never deemed it necessary to cultivate a close intimacy with the grave and gloomy Madame Politique.

It is true Malmaison was not Bonaparte's sole country residence. The city of Paris had presented him with the pleasure-castle of St. Cloud, the same which Louis XVI. gave to his wife, and where, to the very great annoyance of the proud Parisians, she had for the first time engraven on the regulation-tablets, at the entrance of the park, the fatal words—"*De par la Reine.*"

Now this royal mansion of pleasure belonged to the first consul of the republic; it was his summer residence, but there he was still the consul, the first magistrate, and the representative of France; and he had there to give receptions, hold levees, receive the ministers, councillors of state, and the foreign ambassadors, and appear in all the pomp and circumstance of his position.

But in Malmaison his countenance and his being were changed. Here he was the cheerful man, enjoying life; he was the joyous companion, the modest land-owner, who with genial delight surveyed the produce of his soil, and even calculated how much profit it could bring him.

"The first consul in Malmaison," said the English minister, Fox, "the first consul in St. Cloud, and the first consul in the Tuileries, are three different persons, who together form that great and wonderful idea; I should exceedingly like to be able to represent exactly after nature these three portraits; they must be very much alike, and yet very different."

It is certain, however, that of these three portraits that of the first consul in Malmaison was the most amiable, and that of the first consul of the Tuileries the most imposing.

In Malmaison Bonaparte's countenance was cheerful and free from care; in the Tuileries he was grave and dignified. On his clouded brow were enthroned great designs; from the deep, dark eyes shot lightnings ready to fire a world—to erect or destroy kingdoms. In Malmaison these eyes with cheerful brilliancy reposed on Josephine; his otherwise earnest lips welcomed there the beloved of his heart with merry pleasantry and spirited raillery; there he loved to see Josephine in simple, modest toilet; and if in the lofty halls of the Tuileries he exacted from the wife of the first consul a brilliant toilet, the bejewelled magnificence of the first lady of France, he was delighted when in Malmaison he saw coming through the green foliage the wife of General Bonaparte in simple white muslin, with a laughing countenance; and with her sweet voice, which he still considered as the finest music he ever heard, she bade welcome to her husband who here was changed into her tender lover.

In Malmaison, Bonaparte would even put off his general's uniform, and, in his plain gray coat of a soldier, walk through the park in the neighborhood, resting on the arm of his confidant, Duroc, and would begin a friendly conversation with the first farmer he met, perfectly satisfied when in the little man with the gray tightly-buttoned coat, no one suspected or imagined to see the first consul of the republic.

Every Saturday the first consul hastened to the chateau to pass there, as he said, his Sunday, his day of rest; and only on Monday morning did he return to Paris, "to take up his chain again."

How genial and happy were these days of rest! How eagerly did Josephine labor to make them days of felicity for Bonaparte! how ingenious to prepare for him new fes-

tivities and new surprises! and how her eyes brightened when she had succeeded in making Bonaparte joyous and contented!

If the weather was favorable, the whole company in Malmaison, the young generals, with their beautiful, young, and lively wives, who surrounded Bonaparte and Josephine, and of whom a great number belonged to their family, made promenades through the park, then they seated themselves on a fine spot to repeat stories or to indulge in harmless sociable games, in which Bonaparte with the most cheerful alacrity took part. Even down to the game of "catch" and to that of "room-renting" did Bonaparte condescend to play; and as Marie Antoinette with her husband and her court played at blindman's-buff in the gardens of Trianon, so Bonaparte was pleased on the lawns of Malmaison to play at "room-renting."

How often after a dark, cloudy morning, when suddenly at noon the skies would become clear and the sunshine break through the clouds, would Bonaparte's countenance gladden with all the spirit of a school-boy, in the midst of holidays, and, throwing off his coat, laughingly exclaim, "Now come, one and all, and let us rent the room!"

And then on the large, open lawn, surrounded on all sides by tall trees, the first consul with his wife, his generals and their young wives, would begin the exhilarating, harmless child's-play, forgetful of all care, void of all fear, except that he should lose his tree, and that as a penniless individual having to rent a room he would have to stand in the centre before all eyes, just as first consul he stood before all eyes in the centre of France, and struggled for a place the importance and title of which were known only to his silent soul.

But in Malmaison, at the game of "room to let," Bonaparte had no remembrance whatever of the ambitious wishes of the first consul; the whole world seemed to have set; the

memories of his youth passed before his eyes in such beauty, saluting him with the gracious looks of childhood, as nearly to make him an enthusiast.

How often, when on Josephine's arm, surrounded by a laughing, noisy group of friends, and walking through shady paths, on hearing the bells of the neighboring village chime their vespers, would Bonaparte suddenly interrupt the conversation and stand still to hear them! With a motion of the hand he would command silence, while he listened with a smile of grief to sounds which recalled days long gone by. "These bells remind me of the days of my boyhood," said he to Josephine; "it seems to me, when I hear them, that I am still in Brienne."

To keep alive the memories of his school-days in Brienne, he sent for one of his teachers, the Abbé Dupuis, who had been remarkably kind to him, and invited him to Malmaison, to arrange there a library, and to take charge of it; he sent also for the porter of Brienne whose wife he had so severely prohibited from entering the theatre, and made him the porter of the chateau.

In bad weather and on rainy days the whole company gathered in the large drawing-room, and found amusement in playing the various games of cards, in which Bonaparte not only took much interest, but in which he so eagerly played, that he often had recourse to apparent bungling, so as to command success. Adjoining the drawing-room, where conversation and amusements took place, was a room where the company sang and practised music, to the delight of Bonaparte, who often, when one of his favorite tunes was played, would chime in vigorously with the melody, nowise disturbed by the fact that he never could catch the right tune, and that he broke out every time into distressing discordance!

But all songs and music subsided, all plays were interrupted, when Bonaparte, excited perhaps by the approaching

twilight, or by some awakened memory, began to relate one of those tragic, fearful stories which no one could tell so well as he. Then, with arms folded behind his back, he slowly paced the drawing-room, and with sinister looks, tragic manner, and sepulchral voice, he would begin the solemn introduction of his narrative:

"When death strikes, at a distance, a person whom we love," said he, one evening, with a voice tremulous with horror, "a certain foreboding nearly always makes us anticipate the event, and the person, touched by the hand of death, appears to us at the moment we lose him on earth."

"How very sad and mournful that sounds!" sighed Josephine, as she placed both her arms on Bonaparte's shoulder, as if she would hold him, and chain him to earth, that he might not vanish away with every ghost-like form.

Bonaparte turned to her with a genial smile, and shook his head at her, so as to assure her of his existence and his love. Then he began his story with all the earnestness and tragic power of an improvisator of ancient Rome. He told how once Louis XIV., in the great gallery of Versailles, received the bulletin of the battle of Friedlingen, and how, unfolding it, he read to the assembled court the names of the slain and of the wounded. Quietness reigned in the splendidly-illumined gallery; and the courtiers in their embroidered coats, who, ordinarily, were so full of merriment and so high-spirited, had, all at once, become thoughtful. They gathered in a circle around the monarch, from whose lips slowly, like falling tears, fell one by one the names of the killed. Here and there the cheeks of their relatives turned pale. Suddenly the Count de Beaugré saw appear, at the farther end of the gallery, stately and ghost-like, the blood-stained figure of his son, who, with eyes wide open, stared at his father, and saluted him with a slight motion of the head, and then glided away through the door. "My son is dead!" cried Count de Beaugré—and,

at the very same moment, the king uttered his name as one of the slain!" *

"Ah! may I never see such a ghost-like figure," murmured Josephine, drawing closer to her husband. "Bonaparte, promise me that you will never go to war again; that you will keep peace with all the world, so that I may have no cause of alarm!"

"And to tremble at my ghost," exclaimed Bonaparte, laughing. "Look at this selfish woman, she does not wish me a hero's death, lest I should appear to her here in the shape of a bloody placard!"

With her small bejewelled hand Josephine closed his mouth, and ordered lights to be brought; she asked Lavalette to play a lively dancing-tune, and cried out to the joyous youthful group, at the head of whom were Hortense and Eugene, to fall in for a dance.

"Nothing more charming," writes the Duchess d'Abrantes, "could be seen than a ball in Malmaison, made up as it was of the young ladies whom the military family of the first consul brought together, and who, without having the name of it, formed the court of Madame Bonaparte. They were all young, many of them very beautiful; and when this lovely group were dressed in white crape, adorned with flowers, their heads crowned with wreaths as fresh as the hues of their young, laughing, charming faces, it was indeed a bewitching sight to witness the animated and lively dance in these halls, through which walked the first consul, surrounded by the men with whom he discussed and decided the destinies of Europe." †

But the best and most exciting amusement in Malmaison was the theatre; and nothing delighted Bonaparte so much as this, where the young troop of lovers in the palace per-

* Bourrienne, "Mémoires," vol. iii., p. 225.
† Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. iii., p. 329.

formed little operas and vaudevilles, and went through their parts with all the eagerness of real actors, perfectly happy in having the consul and his wife for audience. In Malmaison, Bonaparte abandoned himself with boundless joy to his fondness for the theatre; here he applauded with all the gusto of an amateur, laughed with the *laisser-aller* of a college-boy at the harmless jokes of the vaudevilles, and here also he took great pleasure in the dramatic performances of Eugene, who excelled especially in comic *rôles*.

Bonaparte had a most convenient stage constructed in Malmaison for his actors; he had the most beautiful costumes made for each new piece, and the actors Talma and Michet had to come every week to the chateau, to give the young people instruction in their parts. The ordinary actors of this theatre in the castle were Eugene and Hortense, Caroline Murat, Lauriston, M. Didelot, the prefect of the palace, some of the officers attached to the establishment, and the Count Bourrienne, the friend of Bonaparte's youth, who now had become the first secretary of the consul. The pieces which Bonaparte attended with the greatest pleasure were the "Barber of Seville," and "Mistrust and Malice." The young and amiable Hortense made an excellent Rosine in the "Barber of Seville," and Bonaparte never failed to clap his hands in hearty applause to Hortense, when Josephine with cheerful smiles would thank him, for she seemed as proud of her daughter's talent as of her husband's applause.

Bourrienne, in his memoirs, gives a faithful description of those evening theatrical performances, and of the happy life enjoyed in Malmaison; he lingers with a sober joy over those beautiful and innocent memories of other days.

"Bonaparte," says he, "found great pleasure in our dramatic entertainments; he loved to see comedies represented by those who surrounded him, and oftentimes paid us flattering compliments. Though it amused me as much as it did

the others, yet I was more than once obliged to call Bonaparte's attention to the fact that my other occupations did not give me time enough to learn my parts. He then, in his flattering way, said: 'Ah, Bourrienne, let me alone. You have so excellent a memory! You know that this is an amusement to me! You see that these performances enliven Malmaison and make it cheerful! Josephine is so fond of them! Rise a little earlier!'

"'It is a fact—I sleep a great deal!'

"'*Allons*, Bourrienne, do it to please me; you do make me laugh so heartily! Deprive me not of this pleasure. You know well that otherwise I have but few recreations.'

"'Ah, *parbleu!* I will not deprive you of it. I am happy to be able to contribute something to your amusement.' Consequently I rose earlier, to learn my parts.

"On the theatre days the company at Malmaison was always very large. After the performance a brilliant crowd undulated like waves in the halls of the first story. The most animated and varied conversation took place, and I can truly affirm that cheerfulness and sincerity were the life of those conversations, and their principal charm. Refreshments of all kinds were distributed, and Josephine performed the honors of those gatherings with so much amiableness and complacency that each one might believe she busied herself more with him than with any one else. At the end of the delightful soirées, which generally closed after midnight, we returned to Paris, where the cares of life awaited us."*

Time was spent not only in festivities and amusements at Malmaison, but sciences and arts also formed there a serious occupation, and it was Josephine who was the prime mover. She invited to the chateau painters, sculptors, musicians, architects, and savants of every profession, and thus to the Graces she added the Arts for companions.

* Bourrienne, "Mémoires," vol. v., p. 26.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

FLOWERS AND MUSIC.

Above all things, Josephine, in her retreat, devoted her time and leisure hours to botany and to her dear flowers. Alexander Lenoir, the famous architect of that day, had to assist her in enlarging the little castle of Malmaison, and to open more suitable halls for the arts and sciences. Under Josephine's direction there arose the splendid library-room resting upon columns; it was Josephine who had the beautiful gallery of paintings constructed, and also with remarkable judgment purchased a selection of the finest paintings of the great masters to adorn this gallery. Besides which, she gave to living painters orders of importance, and encouraged them to originate new pieces, that art itself might have a part in the new era of peace and prosperity, which, under the consulate, seemed to spread over France.

Alongside of the paintings Josephine adorned this gallery with the finest antique statues, with a collection of the rarest painted vases of Pompeii, and with ten paintings on cement, memorials of Grecian art, representing the nine Muses and Apollo Mersagetos. These last splendid subjects were a present which the King of Naples had given to Josephine during her residence in Italy. Always attentive not only to promote the arts, but also to help the artists and to increase their reputation, Josephine would buy some new pieces of sculpture, and give them a place in Malmaison. The two most exquisite masterpieces of Canova, "The Dancing-Girl" and "Paris," were purchased by Josephine at an enormous price for her gallery, whose chief ornament they were.

Her fondness for flowers was such that she spared neither expense nor labor to procure those worthy of Malmaison. She caused also large green-houses and hot-houses to be

constructed, the latter suited to the culture of the pineapple and of the peach. In the green-houses were found flowers and plants of every zone, and of all countries. People, knowing her taste for botany, sent her from the most remote places the choicest plants. Even the prince regent of England, the most violent and bitter enemy of the first consul, had high esteem for this taste of Josephine; and during the war, when some French ships, captured by the English, were found to have on board a collection of tropical plants for her, he had them carried with all dispatch to Madame Bonaparte.

Josephine had a lofty aim: she wanted to gather into her hot-houses all the species and families, all the varieties of the tropical plants, and she strove to accomplish this with a perseverance, a zeal, and an earnestness of which no one would have thought her indolent, soft creole nature capable. To increase her precious collection, she spared neither money nor time, neither supplications nor efforts. All travellers, all seafaring men, who came into her drawing-room were entreated to send plants to Malmaison; and even the secretary of the navy did not fail to give instructions to the captains of vessels sailing to far-distant lands to bring back plants for the wife of the first consul. If it were a matter of purchase, nothing was too expensive, and when, through her fondness for beautiful objects, Josephine's purse was exhausted, and her means curtailed, she sooner gave up the purchase of a beautiful ornament than that of a rare plant.

The hot-houses of Malmaison caused, therefore, a considerable increase in her expenses, and were a heavy burden to her treasury; and for their sake, when the day of payment came, Josephine had to receive from her husband many severe reproaches, and was forced to shed many a bitter tear. But this, perhaps, made them still dearer; no sooner were the tears dried up and the expenses covered,

than Josephine again abandoned herself with renewed zeal to her passion for collecting plants and costly studies in botany, especially since she had succeeded in winning to her person the renowned botanist and learned Bonpland, and in having him appointed superintendent of her gardens and hot-houses. It was Bonpland who cultivated Josephine's inclination for botany, and exalted her passion into a science. He filled the green-houses of Malmaison with the rarest plants, and taught Josephine at the same time their classifications and sexes, and she quickly proved herself to be a zealous and tractable pupil. She soon learned the names of the plants, as well as their family names, as classified by the naturalists; she became acquainted with their origin and their virtues, and was extremely sad and dejected when, in one of her families, a single species was wanting. But what a joy when this gap was filled! No price was too exorbitant, then, to procure the missing species; and one day she paid for a small, insignificant plant from Chili the high price of three thousand francs, filling Bonpland with ecstasy, but the emperor with deep wrath as soon as he heard it.*

Next to botany, it was music which Josephine delighted in and cultivated. Since the cares and the numerous relations of her diversified life claimed so much of her time, she had abandoned the exercises of music; and it was only at the hour of unusual serenity of mind, or of more lively recollections of the past, that she was heard singing softly one of the songs of her own native isle, even as Bonaparte himself, when he was meditating and deciding about some new campaign, would betray the drift of his thoughts by singing louder and louder the favorite melody of the day, *Marlborough s'en va-t-en guerre.* But Josephine had the satisfaction that Hortense was not only an excellent performer

* Avrillon, "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Josephine."

on the piano and the harp, but that she could also write original compositions, whose softness and harmonious combinations made them popular throughout France. Another satisfaction was, that Eugene sang, in a fine clear voice, with great talent, and that frequently he would by his excellent singing draw even the first consul into loud expressions of admiration.

Bonaparte was not easily satisfied as regards singing; it was seldom that music elicited any commendation from him. The Italian music alone could excite his enthusiasm, and through its impassioned fervor rouse him up, or its humorous passages enliven him. Therefore Bonaparte, when consul or emperor, always patronized the Italian music in preference to any other, and he constantly and publicly expressed this liking, without considering how much he might thereby wound the French *artistes* in their ambition and love of fame. He therefore appointed an Italian to be first singer at the opera. It is true this was Maestro Pæsiello, whose operas were then making their way through Europe, and everywhere meeting with approbation. Bonaparte also was extremely fond of them, and at every opportunity he manifested to the *maestro* his good-will and approbation. But one day this commendation of Pæsiello was changed to the most stinging censure. It was on the occasion of the first representation of Pæsiello's *Zingari in Fiera*. The first consul and his wife were in their *loge*, and to show to the public how much he honored and esteemed the composer, he had invited Pæsiello to attend the performance in his *loge*.

Bonaparte followed the performance with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of gratification; he heartily applauded each part, and paid to Pæsiello compliments which were the more flattering since every one knew that the lips which uttered them were not profuse in their use. A tenor part had just ended, and its effect had been remarkable.

The audience was full of enthusiasm. Bonaparte, who by his hearty applause had given the signal to a storm of cheers, turned toward Pæsiello, and, offering him his hand, exclaimed:

"Truly, my dear friend, the man who has composed this melody can boast of being the first composer in Europe!"

Pæsiello became pale, his whole body trembled, and, with stammering voice, he said:

"General, this melody is from Cimarosa. I have placed it in my opera merely to please the singers."

The first consul shrugged his shoulders.

"I am sorry, my dear sir," said he, "but I cannot recall what I have said."

The next day, however, he sent to the composer of the opera, as an acknowledgment of his esteem, a magnificent present, with which he no doubt wished to heal the pain which he had unwittingly caused the *maestro*. But Pæsiello possessed a temper easily wounded, and the more so since he considered himself as the first and greatest composer in the world, and was sincere in the opinion that others could compose good music, but that his alone was grand and distinguished.

Bonaparte's present could not, therefore, heal the wound which the praise of Cimarosa's melody had inflicted, and this wound was soon to be probed deeper, and become fatal to Pæsiello. Another new opera from Pæsiello, *Proserpina*, was to be represented. The first consul, who was anxious to secure for his *protégé* a brilliant success, had given orders to bring it out in the most splendid style; the most beautiful decorations and the richest costumes had been provided, and a stage erected for a ballet, on which the favorite ballet-leaders of Paris were to practise their art.

The mighty first consul was, on the evening of the first performance of the opera of *Proserpina*, to learn the lesson,

that there exists a power which will not be bound in fetters, and which is stronger and more influential than the dictates of the mighty—the power of public opinion. This stood in direct opposition to the first consul, by the voiceless, cold silence with which it received Pæsiello's piece. Bonaparte might applaud as heartily as he pleased, and that might elicit an echo from the group of his favorites, but the public remained unmoved, and Bonaparte had the humiliation to see this opera, notwithstanding his approbation, prove a complete failure. He felt as nervous and excited as the composer himself, for he declared loudly and angrily that the French knew nothing about music, and that it was necessary to teach them that the Italians alone understood the art of composition.

To teach this to the French the opera of *Proserpina* was to be repeated until the mind of the public should have been educated to its beauty, and they had been forced to acknowledge it. A decided warfare ensued between this opera and the public, each party being determined to have its own way; the authorities persevered in having the performance repeated, and the public kept away from it with equal obstinacy. The latter, however, had the advantage in this case, for they could not be forced to attend where they were unwilling to go, and so they won the victory, and the authorities had to yield.

Pæsiello, touched to the quick by the failure of *Proserpina*, resigned his position as leader, and left Paris to return to Italy. The question now was, how to fill this important and honorable position. The Parisians were excited about this nomination, and divided into two parties, each of which defended its candidate with the greatest zeal, and maintained that he would be the one who would receive Bonaparte's appointment. The candidates of these two parties were the Frenchman Méhul and the Italian Cherubini. Those who formed the party of Cherubini calculated

especially on Bonaparte's well-known preference for Italian music. They knew that, though he was much attached to Méhul, whom he had known before the expedition to Egypt, and had shown him many favors, yet he had often expressed his contempt for French music, and was committed against him by the very fact of his maintaining that the Italians alone understood the art of musical composition.

Méhul had for a long time endured in silence the criticisms of Bonaparte; he had patiently returned no answer when he repeated to him: "Science, and only science—that is all the French musicians understand; my dear sir, grace, melody, and joyousness, are unknown to you Frenchmen and to the Germans; the Italians alone are masters here."

One day Méhul, having become tired of these constant discouraging remarks, resolved to let the first consul, who so often gave him bitter pills to swallow, have a taste of them himself.

He went, therefore, to his friend, the poet Marsollier, and begged him to write an extremely lively and extravagant piece, whose design would be absurd enough to make it pass as the work of some Italian pamphlet-writer, and at the same time he enjoined the most profound secrecy.

Marsollier complied willingly with the wishes of his friend, and after a few days he brought him the text for the small opera *Irato*. With the same alacrity did Méhul sit down to the task of composing, and when the work was done, Marsollier went to the committee of the comic opera to tell them he had just received from Italy a score whose music was so extraordinary that he was fully convinced of its success, and had therefore been to the trouble, notwithstanding the weakness and foolishness of the *libretto*, to translate the text into French. The committee tried the score, was enchanted with the music, and was fully convinced of the brilliant success of the little opera, inasmuch as the strange and lively text was well adapted to excite the

hilarity and the merriment of the public. The first singers of the opera were rivals for the parts; all the newspapers published the pompous advertisement that in a short time would be performed at the *Opéra Comique* a charming, entrancing opera, the maiden piece of a young Italian.

Finally its first performance was announced; the first consul declared that he and his wife would attend, and he invited Méhul, whom he liked to tease and worry, because he loved him from his heart, to attend the performance in his *loge.*

"It will undoubtedly be a mortification to you, my poor friend," said he, laughing; "but perhaps when you hear this enchanting music, so different from that of the French, you will imitate it, and cease composing."

Méhul replied with a bow; he then began to excuse himself from accompanying the first consul to the theatre; and it was only after Bonaparte and Josephine had pressed him very much, that he accepted the invitation, and went with them to their *loge.*

The opera began, and, immediately after the first melody, Bonaparte applauded and expressed his admiration. There never had been any thing more charming—never had the French written music with so much freshness, elegance, or so naturally. Bonaparte continued his praise, and oftentimes repeated: "It is certain there is nothing superior to Italian music."

At last the opera ended amid a real storm of applause; and, with their enthusiasm at the highest pitch, the audience claimed to know the names of the poet and of the composer. After a long pause the curtain rose and the registrar appeared; he made the three customary bows, and in a loud voice named Marsollier as the author and Méhul as the composer of the opera *Irato.*

The audience received this news with an unceasing storm of applause. They, like the consul and the singers

who had taken part in the opera, knew nothing of the mystification, so well had the secret been kept.

Josephine turned smilingly to Bonaparte, and with her own charming grace offered her hand to Méhul and thanked him for the twofold enjoyment he had that day prepared for her, by furnishing her his entrancing opera, and by having prepared a little defeat of Bonaparte, that traitor to his country, who dared prefer the Italian music to the French.

Bonaparte himself looked at the affair on its bright side; he had enjoyed the opera; he had laughed; he was satisfied, and consequently he overlooked the deceitful surprise.

"Conquer me always in this manner!" said he, laughing, to Méhul, "and I shall enjoy both your fame and my amusement."

The friends of Cherubini thought of this little event when the question arose as to the appointment to the situation of first singer at the Grand Opera, and they therefore did not hesitate to wager that Cherubini would be appointed, since he was an Italian.

But they knew not that Bonaparte had pardoned Méhul, and frequently joked with him, whilst he ever grumbled at Cherubini on account of an expression which the latter had once allowed himself to use against General Bonaparte.

Bonaparte had conversed with Cherubini after a representation of one of his operas, and, while he congratulated him, he however added that this opera did not please him as much as the other pieces of Cherubini—that he thought it somewhat sober and scientific, and that he missed in it the accustomed richness of the *maestro's* melodies. This criticism wounded Cherubini as if pierced by a dagger, and with the irritable vehemence of an Italian he replied: "General, busy yourself in winning battles—that is your

trade; but leave me to practise mine, about which you know nothing."

The Consul Bonaparte had neither forgotten nor pardoned Cherubini's answer; and, despite his fondness for Italian music, he was resolved to give to Méhul the position vacated by Pæsiello.

Josephine approved entirely of this choice, and, in order to witness Méhul's joy, she invited him to Malmaison, that the consul might there inform him of his appointment. How great, however, was her and Bonaparte's surprise, when Méhul, instead of being delighted with this distinguished appointment, positively refused to accept it!

"I can accept this position only under one condition," said Méhul, "which is, that I may be allowed to divide it with my friend Cherubini."

"Do not speak to me about him," exclaimed Bonaparte, with animation; "he is a coarse man, and I cannot tolerate him."

"He may have had the misfortune to displease you," replied Méhul, eagerly, "but he is a master to us all, and especially as regards sacred music. He now is in a very inferior position; he has a large family, and I sincerely desire to reconcile him to you."

"I repeat to you that I do not wish to know any thing about him."

"In that case I must decline the position," said Méhul, gravely, "and nothing will alter my resolution. I am a member of the Institute—Cherubini is not; I do not wish it to be said that I have misused the good-will with which you honor me for the sake of confiscating to my profit every situation, and of despoiling a man of reputation of the reward to which he is most justly entitled."

And Méhul, notwithstanding Josephine's intercession and Bonaparte's ill-will, remained firm in his decision; he would not accept the honorable and distinguished position

of first singer at the Grand Opera; and Bonaparte, after expressing his determination, would not change it. Neither would he confer upon Cherubini the honor refused by Méhul. He therefore commissioned Josephine to name a successor to Pæsiello; and she went to Madame de Montesson, to confer with her on the matter.

Madame de Montesson could suggest no definite plan, but she told Josephine of a French composer, of the name of Lesueur, who, notwithstanding his great talents, lived in his native city of Paris poor and unknown, and who had not succeeded in having his opera, "The Bards," represented at the Grand Opera, simply on the ground that he was a Frenchman, and that every one knew Bonaparte's strange aversion to French music.

Josephine's generous heart at once took sides with Lesueur; her exquisite tact taught her that the public ought to know that the first consul would not consult his own personal gratification, when the question was to render justice to a Frenchman. She therefore recommended to her husband, with all her ability, the poor composer Lesueur, who was unknown to fame, and lost in obscurity; she represented his appointment as such an act of generosity and of policy, that Bonaparte acceded to her wishes at once, and appointed Lesueur to the office of first master of the Grand Opera.

And Josephine had the pleasure of seeing that the new opera-leader justified her expectations. His opera, "The Bards," was naturally brought into requisition; it had a brilliant and unexampled success, and even Bonaparte, at the first representation, forgot his prejudices against French music, and applauded quite as heartily as if it had been Italian.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PRELUDE TO THE EMPIRE.

The sun of happiness which for Josephine seemed to shine so brightly over Malmaison, had nevertheless its long shadows and its dark specks; even her gracious countenance was obscured, her heart filled with sad forebodings, and her bosom stung as if by scorpions hidden under flowers.

Josephine had in her immediate circle violent and bitter enemies, who were ever busy in undermining the influence which she possessed over her husband, to steal from his heart the love he cherished for her, and to remove from his side the woman who, by her presence, kept them in the shade, and who wielded or destroyed the influence which they desired to have over him.

These enemies were the brothers and especially the sisters of Bonaparte. Among the brothers of the first consul, Lucien showed to his sister-in-law the most violent and irreconcilable enmity. He left no means untried to do her injury, and to convert her into an object of suspicion, and this because he was convinced that Josephine was the prime cause of the hostile sentiments of Napoleon against him, and because he believed that, Josephine once out of the way, Napoleon's ear would be open to conviction, and that he, Lucien, the most powerful citizen, next to his brother, would be the second "first consul." He was not aware that Napoleon's keen eagle eye had fathomed his ambitious heart; that he was the one who kept Lucien away, because he mistrusted him, because he feared his ambition, and even looked upon him as capable of the bold design of casting Napoleon aside, and setting himself up in his place. Lucien was unaware of the influence which Josephine frequently exerted over the mind of the first consul, in favor of himself; that it was she who had pacified Napoleon's

anger at Lucien's marriage, contracted without his consent, and prevented him from annulling it violently. The other brothers of Napoleon, influenced, perhaps, by the enmity of Lucien, were also disaffected toward their sister-in-law, and of them all, only Louis, the youngest, the one who loved the first consul most tenderly and most sincerely, showed toward her due respect and affection.

His three sisters were still more active in their opposition. Constantly quarrelling among themselves, they, however, united heartily in the common feeling of hatred to Josephine. It was she who stood in their way, who every day excited anew their anger by the position she held at Napoleon's side, and in virtue of which the three sisters were thrust into the background. Josephine, the wife of the first consul, was the one to whom France made obeisance, upon whom the ambassadors of foreign powers first waited, and afterward upon the sisters of the first consul. It was Josephine who took the precedence in solemn ceremonies, and to whom, by Bonaparte's commands, they had to manifest respect. And this woman, who by her eminence placed the sisters of Bonaparte in an inferior position, was not of nobler or more distinguished blood than they; she was not young, she was not beautiful, she was not even able to give birth to a child, for which her husband so intensely longed.

The three sisters might have been submissive to the daughter of a prince, they might have conceded to her the right of precedence, but the widow of the Viscount de Beauharnais was not superior to them in rank or birth; she was far inferior to them in beauty and youth—and yet they had to give way to her, and see her take the first place!

From these sentiments of jealousy and envy sprang the enmity which the three sisters of Bonaparte, Madame Elise Bacciocchi, Madame Pauline Borghese, and Madame Caroline Murat, cherished against Josephine, and which her gentle words and kind heart could never assuage.

Josephine was in their way—she must therefore fall. Such is the key to the right understanding of the conduct of the three beautiful sisters of Napoleon toward the wife of their brother. In their violence they disregarded all propriety, and shrank from no calumny or malice to accomplish their ends. It was a constant warfare with intrigues and malicious suspicions. Every action of Josephine was observed, every step was watched, in the hope of finding something to render her suspicious to her husband. On every occasion the three sisters besieged him with complaints concerning the lofty and proud demeanor of Josephine, and ridiculed him about his old, childless wife, who stood in the way of his growing fame! Though Bonaparte in these conflicts always sided with Josephine against his sisters, yet there probably remained in his heart a sting from the ridicule which they had directed against him.

This hostility of the Bonaparte family was not unknown to Josephine; her soul suffered under these ceaseless attacks, her heart was agonized at the thought that the efforts of her sisters-in-law might finally succeed in withdrawing from her the love of her husband. She was persuaded that even in the Bonaparte family she needed a protector, that she must look for one among the brothers, so as to counteract the enmity of the sisters; and she chose for this Louis Bonaparte. She entreated Napoleon to give to his young, beloved brother the hand of her daughter Hortense. It would be a new bond chaining Bonaparte to her—a new fortress for her love—if he would but make her daughter his sister-in-law, and his brother her son-in-law.

Napoleon did not oppose her wishes; he consented that Hortense should be married to his brother. It is true the young people were not consulted; for the first time, Josephine's selfishness got the better of her love for her child—she sacrificed the welfare of her daughter to secure her own happiness.

But Hortense loved another, yet she yielded to the entreaties and tears of her mother, and became the wife of this laconic, timid young man, whose meagre, unpretending appearance resembled so little the ideal which her maidenly heart had pictured of her future husband.

Louis on his side had not the slightest inclination for Hortense; he never would have chosen her for his wife, for their characters were too different; their inclinations and wishes were not in sympathy with each other. But through obedience to the wishes of his brother, he accepted the proffered hand of Josephine's daughter, and became the husband of the beautiful, blond-haired Hortense de Beauharnais.

In February, of the year 1802, the marriage of the young couple took place, and this family event was celebrated with the most magnificent festivities. Josephine's joy and happiness were complete—she had thrown a bridge over the abyss, and was now secure against the hostilities of her sisters-in-law, by giving up her own daughter.

Every thing was resplendent with beauty and joy at these festivities; every thing wore an appearance of happiness; only the countenances of the newly-married couple were grave and sad, and their deep melancholy contrasted strikingly with the happiness of which they themselves were the cause. Adorned with diamonds and flowers, Hortense appeared to be a stranger to all the pomp which surrounded her, and to be occupied only with her own sad communings. Louis Bonaparte was pale and grave, like Hortense; he seldom addressed a word to the young wife that the orders of his brother had given him; and she avoided her husband's looks, perhaps to hinder him from reading there the indifference and dislike she felt for him.*

But Josephine was happy, for she knew the noble, faith-

* "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Josephine, la Cour de Navarre," etc., par Mlle. Ducrest, vol. i., p. 49.

ful, and generous spirit of the man to whom she had given her daughter; and she trusted that the two young hearts, now that they were linked together, would soon love one another. She hoped much more from this alliance; she hoped not only to find in it a shield against domestic animosities, but also to give to her husband, even if indirectly, the children he so much desired—for the offspring of his brother and the daughter of his Josephine would be nearly the same as his own, and they could adopt and love them as such. This was Josephine's hope, the dream of her happiness, when she gave her daughter in marriage to the brother of her husband.

The fact that the first consul was childless was not only a family solicitude, it was also a political question. The people themselves had changed the face of affairs, they had by solemn vote decided to confer the consulate for life upon Napoleon, who had previously been elected for ten years only. In other words, the French people had chosen Bonaparte for their master and ruler, and he now lacked but the title to be king. Every one felt and knew that this consulate for life was but the prelude to royalty; that the golden laurel-wreath of the first consul would soon be converted into a golden crown, so as to secure to France an enduring peace, and to make firm its political situation.

With her keen political instinct, Josephine trembled at the thought that the King or Emperor Bonaparte would have to establish for himself a dynasty—that he would have to appease the apprehensions of France by offering to the nation a son who would be his legitimate heir and successor. Thus was the subject of divorce kept hanging over her head until the conviction was forced upon her mind that some day Napoleon would be led into sacrificing his love to politics. Josephine was conscious of it, and consequently the hopes of Napoleon's future greatness, which so pleased his brothers and sisters, only made her sorrowful,

and she therefore entreated Bonaparte with tender appeal to remain content with the high dignity he already possessed, and not to tempt fate, nor to allow it to bear him up to a dizzy height, from which the stormy winds of adversity might the more easily prostrate him.

Bonaparte listened to her with a smile, and generally in silence. Once only he replied to her: "Has not your prophetess in Martinique told you that one day you would be more than a queen?"

"And the prophecy is already realized," exclaimed Josephine. "The wife of the consul for life is more than a queen, for her husband is the elect of thirty millions of hearts!" Bonaparte laughed, and said nothing.

Another time Josephine asked him—"Now, Bonaparte, when are you going to make me Empress of the Gauls?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "What an idea," said he; "the little Josephine an empress!"

Josephine answered him with the words of Corneille—"'*Le premier qui fut roi fut un soldat heureux*'" (the first king was a successful soldier); and she added, "The wife of this fortunate soldier shares his rank."

He placed his small, white hand, adorned with rings, under her chin, and gazed at her with a deep, strange look.

"Now, Josephine," said he, after a short pause, "your successful soldier is only, for the present, consul for life, and you are sharing his rank. Be careful, then, that the wife of the first consul surrounds herself with all the brilliancy and the pomp which beseem her dignity. No more economy, no more modest simplicity! The industry of France is at a low ebb—we must make it rise. We must give receptions; we must prove to France that the court of a consul can be as splendid as that of a king. You understand what pomp is—none better than you! Now show yourself brilliant, magnificent, so that the other ladies may

imitate you. But, no foreign stuffs! Silk and velvet from the fabrics of Lyons!"

"Yes," said Josephine, with charming tenderness, "and when afterward my bills become due, you cut them down—you find them too high."

"I only cut down what is too exorbitant," said Bonaparte, laughing. "I have no objection for you to give to the manufacturers any amount of work and profit, but I do not wish them to cheat you." *

Henceforth, the consulate began gradually to exhibit a splendor and pomp which were behind no princely court, and which relegated, amid the dark legends of the fabulous past, the fraternity and the equality of the republic. The absence of pretension, and the simplicity of Malmaison, were now done away with; everywhere the consul for life was followed by the splendors of his dignity, and everywhere Josephine was accompanied by her court.

For now she had a court, and an anteroom, with all its intrigues and flatteries; and its conspiracies already wove their chains around the consul and his wife. It was not suddenly, it was not spontaneously, that this court of the first consul was formed; two years were required for its organization—two years of unceasing labor on the new code of regulations, which etiquette dictated from the remembrances of the past to the palace-officers of the Consul Bonaparte. "How was this in times past? What was the practice?" Such were the constant questions in the interior of the Tuileries, and for the answers they appealed to Madame de Montesson, to the old courtiers, the servants and adherents of royalty. Instead of creating every thing new, they turned by degrees to the usages and manners of the past. Always and in all countries have there been seen at courts caricatures and persons of ill-mannered awkwardness; at the

* Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. iv.

opening of the court of the first consul it is probable that these existed, and appeared still more strange to those who had been used to the manners, traditions, and language of the ancient court of Versailles. Their awkwardness, however, was soon overcome; and Josephine understood so well the rare art of presiding at a court establishment—she was such an accomplished mistress of refined manners and of noble deportment—she united to the perfect manners of the old nobility the most exquisite adroitness, and she knew so well how to adapt all these advantages to every new circumstance—that soon every one bowed to her sovereignty and submitted to her laws.

From the glittering halls of the Tuileries there soon disappeared the sword and the uniform, to be replaced by the gold-embroidered dress, the silk stockings, and the *chapeau bras;* and on the glassy floors of the Tuileries generals and marshals appeared as fine cavaliers, who, submitting to the rules of etiquette, left behind with their regiments the coarse language of the camp. Many of these young generals and heroes had married the beautiful but impoverished daughters of the aristocrats of old monarchical France. These young women, who were the representatives of the ancient noblesse, brought to the Tuileries the traditions of their mothers, and distinguished themselves by the ease of their courtly deportment and their graceful manners; and they thus unconsciously became the teachers of the other young women, who, like their husbands, owed their aristocratic name only to the sword and to their fresh laurels, and not to ancient escutcheons.

In the Tuileries and in St. Cloud there were reception-days, audience-days, and great and small levees, at which were assembled all that France possessed of rank, name, and fame, and where the ambassadors of all the powers accredited at the court of the consul, where all the higher clergy and the pope's nuncio, appeared in full dress.

Bonaparte ventured to remove still further from the landmarks of the revolution, and from its so-called conquests. He restored to France the church; he reopened the temples of religion, and he also gave back to the people their priests.

Just as in the days of old monarchical France, every Sunday, and at every festival, a solemn mass was said at St. Cloud; and in the glass gallery on the way to the chapel, Bonaparte received petitions and granted short audiences. France, with the instinct of its old inclinations and habits, readily returned to this new order of things; and even those who once had with enthusiasm saluted the Goddess of Reason, went now, with hands joined in prayer and eyes bent low, to Notre Dame, to offer again their supplications to the God of Love.

Every thing seemed to return to the old track, every thing was as in the days preceding the revolution—the re-establishment of the throne, the national, willing approbation that the republic had become a monarchy, was, however, still wanting.

Finally, on the 18th of May, 1804, France spoke out the decisive word, and, by the voice of its representatives the senators, it offered to Bonaparte the crown, and requested him to ascend as emperor the throne of France.

Napoleon acceded to these wishes, and, as the senate, in a ceremonious procession, marshalled by Cambacérès, came to St. Cloud to communicate to Bonaparte the wish of France, and to offer to him and to Josephine the dignities of an empire, he accepted it without surprise, and apparently without joy, and allowed himself to be proclaimed NAPOLEON, THE FIRST EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH.

On this memorable day, after Cambacérès, in the name of the senate and of France, had addressed the first consul as the actual emperor, he turned to Josephine, who, with that unparalleled admixture of grandeur, grace, and tender

womanly beauty, which were all so especially her own, was present at this audience at Napoleon's side.

"Madame," said Cambacérès, "there remains yet to the senate a pleasant duty to perform: to bring to your imperial majesty the homage of its respect and the expression of gratitude of the French people. Yes, madame, the public sentiment acknowledges the good which you are ever performing; that you are always accessible to the unfortunate; that you use your influence with the chief magistrate only to diminish evil, and to procure a hearing to those who seek it; and that your majesty with this well-doing combines the most amiable tenderness, rendering thankfulness a pleasant duty. These noble qualities of your majesty foretell that the name of the Empress Josephine will be a watchword of trust and hope; and, as the virtues of Napoleon will ever be to his followers an example to teach them the difficult art of government, so also, the lively remembrance of your goodness will teach to their honorable wives that to strive to dry the tear is the surest means of ruling the heart. The senate deems itself happy in being the first to congratulate your imperial majesty, and he who has the honor of addressing you these sentiments in the name of the senate, dares trust that you will ever number him among your most faithful servants."

It was, then, decided! France had accepted her master, and Cambacérès in his solemn address had already marked out the situation of France and of her rulers. Bonaparte and Josephine were now their imperial majesties, the senators were their most faithful servants. What remained to the people but to call themselves "faithful subjects?"

The people, however, had made known their wishes only through the voice of the senate; it was the senators who had converted Bonaparte into the Emperor Napoleon; but the people were also to make their will known in a solemn manner; they were, through a universal public suffrage, to decide whether the imperial dignity should be given only

for life to Napoleon the First, Emperor of the French, or whether it should be hereditary in his family.

France, wearied with storms and divisions, decided with her five millions of votes for the hereditary imperial dignity in Bonaparte's family, and thus the people of France created their fourth dynasty.

Meanwhile Josephine r ceived this new decision of the nation, not with that disquietude and care which she had formerly experienced. Bonaparte had given her the deepest and strongest proof of his love and faithfulness. He had not only withstood the pressure of his whole family, which had conjured him before his election to the empire to be divorced from his childless wife, but he had in the generosity of his love appointed his heirs and successors, and these were to be the sons of Hortense. The senate had decreed that the imperial dignity should be transmitted as a heritage to Napoleon's two brothers Joseph and Louis, and moreover they had given to Napoleon the right to choose his successors and heirs from the families of the two brothers.

Napoleon had given to Josephine the strongest proof of affection—he had declared the son of her daughter Hortense and of his brother Louis, the little Napoleon Louis, to be his successor and heir, and the idea of a divorce no longer caused apprehensions before which Josephine need tremble.

Bonaparte had appointed the sons of his brother and of Josephine's daughter as his heirs, and the heir of the new imperial throne was already born. Hortense's youth made it hopeful that she would add to the new branch of the Napoleonic dynasty new leaves and new boughs.

Josephine could now rejoice in her happiness and her glory; she could abandon herself to the new splendors of her life with all the enjoyment of her sensitive and excitable nature. She could now receive with smiles and with affable condescension the homage of France, for she was not only

empress by a nation's vote, but she was also empress by the choice of Napoleon her husband.

The brilliancy of this new and glorious horizon was soon overhung by a sombre cloud. The execution of the Duke d'Enghien threw its dark shadows from the last days of the consulate upon the truly royalist heart of Josephine; and now that heart was to receive fresh wounds through the royalists, to whom she had remained true with all the memories of youth, and in whose behalf she had so often, so zealously, and so warmly interceded with her husband.

A new conspiracy against Napoleon's life was discovered, and this time it was the men of the highest ranks of the old aristocracy who were implicated in it. George Cadoudal, the unwearied conspirator, had, while in England, planned with the leaders of the monarchical party residing in France, or who were away from it, a new conspiracy, whose object was to destroy Bonaparte and to re-establish the monarchy.

But Fate was again on the side of the hero of Arcola. His good star still protected him. The conspiracy was discovered, and all those concerned in it were arrested. Among them were the Generals Pichegru and Moreau, the Counts de Polignac, Rivière, Saint Coster, Charles d'Hozier, and many others of the leading and most distinguished royalists. They were now under the avenging sword of justice, and the tribunal had condemned twenty of the accused to death, among whom were the above named. The emperor alone had the power to save them and to extend mercy. But he was this time determined to exhibit a merciless severity, so as to put an end to the royalists, and to prove to them that he was the ruler of France, and that the people without a murmur had given him the power to punish, as guilty of high-treason, those who dared touch their emperor.

Josephine's heart, however, remained true to her memories and her piety; and, according to her judgment, those who, with so much heroic loyalty, remained true to the ex-

iled monarchy, were criminals only as they had imperilled her husband's life, but criminals who, since their plans were destroyed, deserved pardon, because they had sinned through devotion to sacred principles.

Josephine, therefore, opposed Bonaparte's anger, and begged for pardon for the son of the former friend of Queen Marie Antoinette, the Count Jules de Polignac. Bonaparte, however, remained inexorable; he repelled Josephine with vehemence, reproaching her for asking for the life of those who threatened his. But she would not be deterred; since Bonaparte had turned her away with her petitions and prayers, she wanted at least to give to the wife of the Count de Polignac an opportunity to ask pardon for her condemned husband. Despite Bonaparte's wrath, Josephine led the Countess de Polignac into a corridor through which the emperor had to pass, when he went from the council-room into his cabinet, and by this means the countess was fortunate enough, by her tears and prayers, to save her husband's life. The Count de Polignac was pardoned; and now that Bonaparte's heart had once been opened to mercy, he also granted to Josephine the lives of Count Rivière and of General Lajolais, in behalf of whom Hortense had appealed to the emperor. More than twenty of the conspirators were accused and sentenced, some to death and some to severe punishment, but one-half of the accused were, thanks to the prayers of Josephine and of her daughter, pardoned; a few were put to death, and the rest transported. Pichegru committed suicide in prison; Moreau received permission to emigrate to America; George Cadoudal perished on the scaffold.

After this last fruitless attempt to re-establish in France the throne of the Bourbons, the royalists, wearied and terrified, had at least for a time to withdraw into obscurity and solitude, and the newly-established empire appeared in still more striking magnificence. The monarchy by God's grace

had been conquered by the empire by the people's grace, and Napoleon wanted now to show himself to astonished Europe in all the glory of his new dignity. He therefore undertook a journey with his wife through the conquered German provinces; he went to Aix-la-Chapelle, to the city of coronation of the ancient German emperors, and which now belonged to imperial France; he went to Mayence, the golden Mayence of the old Roman days, and which now, after so many streams of bloodshed, had been transferred to France.

This journey of the emperor and empress was one uninterrupted triumphal procession; the population of the old German city applauded, in dishonorable faithlessness, the new foreign ruler; all the clergy received their imperial majesties at the door of the cathedral, where Germany's first emperor, Charlemagne, was buried; and, to flatter the Empress Josephine, the clergy caused a miracle to be performed by her hand. There existed in the sacred treasury of the cathedral a casket of gold, containing the most precious relics, but which was never opened to the eyes of mortals, and whose lock no key fitted. Only once a year was this precious, sacred casket of relics shown to the worshipping crowd, and then locked up in the holy shrine. But for Josephine this treasury was condescendingly opened, and to the empress was presented this casket of relics, and behold, the miracle took place! At the touch of the empress the lid of the casket sprang up, and in it were seen the most precious jewels of royalty, amongst which was the seal-ring of Charlemagne.* No one was more surprised at this miracle than the clergy!

The neighboring German princes came to ancient Mayence to do homage to Josephine, and to win the favor of the sovereign of France toward their little principalities,

* Constant, "Mémoires," vol. iii.

and to assure him of their devotedness. Bonaparte already understood how to receive the humble, flattering German princes with the mien of a gracious protector, and to look upon them with the eye of an emperor, to whom not only the nations but also the princes must bow; and Josephine also excited the admiration of genuine princes and legitimate princesses, by the graciousness and grandeur, by the unaffected dignity and ease with which she knew how to represent the sovereign and the empress.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE POPE IN PARIS.

Fate had reserved another triumph for the ruler of France, the Emperor Napoleon—the triumph that the empire by the people's grace should be converted and exalted into the empire by God's grace. Pope Pius VII., full of thankfulness that Napoleon had re-established the Church in France, and restored to the clergy their rights, had consented to come to Paris for the sake of giving to the empire, created by the will of the French people, the benediction of the Church, and in solemn coronation to place the imperial crown on the head anointed by the hands of God's vicegerent.

Bonaparte received this news with the lofty composure of an emperor who finds it quite natural that the whole world should bow to his wishes, and Josephine received it with the modesty and joyous humility of a pious Christian. She desired above all things the blessing of God and of the Church to rest upon this crown, whose possession had seemed to her until now a spoliation, a sacrilege, and about which her conscience so often reproached her. But when God's

vicegerent, when the Holy Father of Christendom should himself have blessed her husband's crown, and should have made fast on Josephine's brow the imperial diadem, then all blame was removed, then the empress could hope that Heaven's blessing would accompany the new emperor and his wife!

But was it really Napoleon's wish that Josephine should take part in this grand ceremony of coronation? Did he wish that, like him, she should receive from the hands of the pope the consecrated crown?

Such was the deep, important question which occupied, at the approaching arrival of the pope, the young imperial court; a question, too, which occupied Josephine's mind, and also the whole family, and more especially the sisters of Bonaparte.

Josephine naturally desired that it should be so, for this solemn coronation would be a new bond uniting her to her husband, a new guaranty against the evil which the empress's foreboding spirit still dreaded. But for the very same reasons her enemies prepared their weapons to prevent Josephine from obtaining this new consecration and this new glory, and harsh and bitter conflicts took place within the inner circles of the imperial family on account of it, which on both sides were carried on with the deepest animosity and obstinacy, but finally to a complete triumph for Josephine.

Thiers, in his "History of the Consulate and of the Empire," relates the last scenes in this family quarrel:

"Napoleon vacillated between his affection for his wife and the secret presentiments of his policy, when an occurrence took place which nearly caused the sudden ruin of the unfortunate Josephine. Every one was in a state of agitation about the new monarch—brothers, sisters, and allies! In the solemnity which seemed to give to each a blessing, all desired to perform parts adequate to their actual pretensions,

and to their hopes of the future. At the sight of this restlessness, and witnessing the pretensions and claims to which Napoleon was exposed from one of his sisters, Josephine, carried away by anxiety and jealousy, gave utterance to an insulting suspicion against his sister and against Napoleon, a suspicion which agreed with the most bitter calumnies of the royalist emigrants. Napoleon grew violently angry, and, as his wrath mastered his better feelings, he declared to Josephine that he wanted to be divorced from her; that he would have to be, sooner or later, and that it was therefore better to announce it on the spot, before other bonds should unite them still closer together. He sent for his two adopted children, communicated to them this decision, and thus produced on them a most painful impression. Hortense and Eugene de Beauharnais declared with a sad but unwavering determination that they would follow their mother into the exile which was being prepared for her. Josephine manifested a resigned and dignified sorrow. The contrast of their sorrow with the satisfaction which the other portion of the imperial family manifested, deeply lacerated Napoleon's heart, and he relented; for he could not consent to see the companion of his youth and her children, who had been the objects of his deserved affection, made so unhappy by being forced into exile. He took Josephine in his arms, told her with emotion that he could never have the strength to part from her, even if policy itself should dictate it; and he then promised her that she should be crowned with him, and at his side should receive from the pope the divine blessing." *

Josephine, therefore, had won a victory over the hostile sisters, but this defeat made them still more embittered, and though they were now compelled to recognize Josephine as the imperial wife of their brother, yet they would retreat

* Thiers, "Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire," vol. v., p. 249.

only step by step, and at least secure a place near the imperial throne, and not be compelled by the empress to stand behind. Yet this was exactly what was to take place according to the programme, which prescribed for the festivity in Notre Dame that on the day of coronation the brothers of the emperor should carry the trail of his mantle, and that his sisters should at the same time carry the trail of the empress's mantle. But the sisters of Napoleon decidedly opposed this arrangement.

"The emperor, tired of these constant wranglings and domestic strifes, decided as judge, and declared he would no longer listen to these unheard-of and unjustifiable pretensions.

"'Truly,' said he, to the beautiful Pauline, who, as Princess Borghese, considered herself justified in making opposition, 'truly, one would think, after listening to you, that I have despoiled you of the inheritance of the most blessed king our father.'"*

The ambitious sisters, kept within bounds by the angry voice of their brother, who now for the first time showed himself their ruling emperor, had to fall into their places, and abide by the regulations of the ceremony.

Nothing was wanted now to perfect the sacred celebration which was to crown all the triumphs and victories of Napoleon, nothing but the arrival of the pope: the whole imperial family, as well as France, awaited his advent with impatience.

At last the couriers brought the news that the pope had touched the French soil, and that the people were streaming toward him to manifest their respect, and to implore his blessing on their knees; the same people who precisely ten years before had closed the churches, driven the priests into exile, and consecrated their bacchanalian worship to the Goddess of Reason!

* "Histoire du Consulat," vol. v., p. 251.

At last, on the 25th day of November, the pope entered Fontainebleau, where the emperor and the empress had hastened to receive him. No sooner was the pope's approach announced, than Napoleon mounted his horse and rode to meet him some distance on the way. In the centre of the road took place the first interview between the representative of Christendom and the youngest son of the Church, a son who now sat on the throne of those who in former times had enjoyed the privilege of being called the elder sons of the Church.

The pope alighted from his carriage as soon as the emperor was in sight; Napoleon dismounted and hastened to meet and embrace tenderly his holiness, and then to ascend with him the carriage, the question of precedence remaining undecided, as the pope and the emperor entered the carriage at the same time from opposite sides.

Josephine, surrounded by the official dignitaries, the ministers of state, and all the generals, received the pope under the peristyle of the palace of Fontainebleau; and then, after Napoleon had led him into his room, Josephine, accompanied by her ladies, went to welcome Pius, not as empress, but as an humble, devout daughter of the Church, who wished to implore a blessing from the Holy Father of Christendom. Josephine was deeply moved; her whole being was agitated and exalted at once by this greatest of all the privileges which destiny had reserved for her, and by this consecration which she was to receive at the hands of the vicar of Christ.

As the pope, agreeably affected by this respect and emotion of the empress, offered her his hand with a genial smile, Josephine, humble as a little girl, sank down on her knees before him, kissed his hand, and with streaming eyes implored his benediction. Pius, in his soft, winning manner, promised to love her as a daughter, and that she should ever find in him a father.

The empress, deeply moved by this affectionate condescension of the pope, and impressed by the importance and solemnity of the moment, bade her ladies withdraw, whilst she, in solitude and silence, as a confessing child before the priest, should unveil her innermost heart to the Holy Father. She then sank down upon her knees, and, stammering, ashamed, with her voice broken by her sobs, acknowledged to the pope that her marriage to Napoleon had never received the consecration of the Church; that, contracted amid the stormy days of the revolution, it still lacked the blessing hand of the priest, and that her own husband was to be blamed for this neglect. In vain had she often besought him that, since he had restored the Church to France, he should himself give to the world a striking example of his own return by having his marriage blessed by it. But Napoleon refused, although he had been the cause of Cardinal Caprera giving to the marriage of his sister Caroline Murat, long after it had been contracted, the blessing of the Church.

Pius heard this confession of his imperial penitent with holy resentment, and he promised her his aid and protection, assuring her he would refuse the act of coronation if the ecclesiastical marriage did not precede it.

No sooner had Josephine left him, than the pope asked for an interview with the emperor, to whom he declared, with all the zeal of a true servant of the Church, and the conviction of a devout, God-fearing man, that he was willing to crown him, and to grant him the blessing of the Church, for the state of the conscience of emperors had never been examined before their anointment; but if his wife was to be crowned with him, he must refuse his co-operation, because in crowning Josephine he dare not grant the divine sanction to concubinage.

Napoleon, though inwardly much irritated at Josephine, who, as he at once supposed, had made this confession to

the pope in her own interest, was still willing to abide by the circumstances. He did not wish to irritate the pope, who as was well known was unyielding in all matters pertaining to faith; moreover, he could not change any thing in the already published ceremonial of the day, and thus he consented to have the ecclesiastical marriage. After this conversation with the pope, Napoleon went at once to Josephine, and the whole strength of his anger was spent in violent reproaches against her untimely indiscretion.

Josephine endured these silently, and full of inward satisfaction; she did not listen to Napoleon's angry words; she only heard that he was decided to have his marriage sanctioned by the Church, and now she would be his wife before God, as she had been before men for the last ten years. Now at last her fate was decided, and her marriage made irrevocable; now she would no longer dread that Napoleon would punish her childlessness by a divorce.

During the night which preceded the day of the coronation, the night of the 1st of December, the ecclesiastical marriage of Napoleon and Josephine took place in the chapel of the Tuileries. The only witnesses were Talleyrand and Berthier, from both of whom the emperor had exacted an oath of profound silence. Cardinal Fesch, the emperor's uncle, performed the ceremony, and pronounced the benediction of the Church over this marriage, which Bonaparte's love for Josephine had induced him to consent to, and which her love endeavored to make indissoluble.

This marriage, which she desired both as a loving woman and as a devout Christian, was the most glorious triumph which Josephine had ever obtained over the enmity of her husband's sisters, for it was a new proof of the love and faithfulness of this man, whom neither expediency, nor family, nor state reasons, could remove from her, and who, with the hand of love, had guided her away from all the dangers which had surrounded her.

CHAPTER XL.

THE CORONATION.

At last, on the 2d of December, came the day which Napoleon had during many years past longed for within the recesses of his heart; the day which his ambition had hoped for, the day of his solemn coronation. And now the victorious soldier was to see all his laurels woven into an imperial crown—that which Julius Cæsar had tried to win, and for which the republic punished him with death.

But now the republicans were silent: before this new Julius Cæsar they dare not lift up their swords, for the power belonged to him, and that he knew how to punish had been seen by trembling France not long ago at the execution of George Cadoudal and his associates, the people sanctioning those executions.

There was no Brutus there to plunge the dagger into the breast of the new Cæsar. His was the victory, the throne, the crown; and all France was in joyous excitement at this new triumph, that the pope himself should come from Rome to Paris so as to place the crown on the head of an emperor by the grace of the people, and to make of the elect of the people an elect of God.

The day had scarcely begun to dawn when all the streets of Paris through which the imperial as well as the papal procession had to move toward Notre Dame were filled with wave-like masses of human beings, who soon occupied not only the streets but all the windows and all the roofs of the houses. Those who were fortunate enough to be provided with cards of admission into Notre Dame, went at six o'clock in the morning to the cathedral, for whose adorning during the last fourteen days more than a thousand workmen had been busy, and who had not yet quite finished their work, retiring only when the approach of the pope

and of his suite was announced. In the interior of the Tuileries began from the commencement of the day, on three different sides, a lively movement.

Here, in the apartments which the pope occupied, gathered together the cardinals, the clergy, and all the church dignitaries who in the pope's suite were to proceed to Notre Dame.

There, in the apartments of the emperor, a host of courtiers and officers waited from early dawn for the moment when the toilet of the emperor should be completed, and he should go to the great throne-room, where the empress and the imperial family would await him.

The greatest excitement, however, naturally prevailed in the apartments of the empress, whose toilet occupied a host of chambermaids and ladies of the court, and which had already been for months the subject of thought, labor, and art, for painter and embroiderer, and for all manner of professions, as well as for the master of ceremonies. For this imperial toilet-ceremonial was to be in accordance with the traditions of ancient France, but was not, at the same time, to be a mere imitation of the coronation-toilet of the Bourbons, whom the revolution had dethroned, the same revolution which had opened for Napoleon the way to the throne.

For this important ceremony, therefore, special costumes, somewhat resembling those of former centuries, had been found. The painter Ingrès had furnished the designs for these costumes, and also plans for the procession and for the groupings in Notre Dame; he had prepared all this in pictures of great effect for the emperor's inspection. But in order to show to advantage the several costumes, as well as the train of personages, and the subdivisions of the different groups of the imperial dignitaries, Ingrès had caused small puppets to be dressed in similar costumes, and arrayed in the order of the procession according to the pre-

scribed ceremonies for that day; and for weeks the imperial court had been studying these costumes, and every one's duty had been to impress on his mind the position assigned to him for the day of coronation.*

The pope's toilet was the first completed; and at nine o'clock, all dressed in white, he entered a carriage drawn by eight grays; over it in gilt bronze were the tiara and the attributes of papacy. In front of the carriage rode one of his chamberlains upon a white ass, bearing a large silver cross before God's vicegerent. Behind it in new carriages came the cardinals, the prelates, and the Italian officers of the pope's palace.

While the papal train was moving slowly on the quays of the Seine toward the cathedral, amid the sounds of bells, and the unceasing, joyful shouts of the people, all was yet in motion within the apartments of the emperor and empress. On all sides hurried along the dignitaries and officers who were to form a part of the imperial procession.

For this day, Napoleon had been obliged to cast off his plain uniform and substitute the splendid theatrical costume of imperial magnificence. The stockings were of silk, wrought with gold, embroidered round the edge with imperial crowns; the shoes were of white velvet, worked and embroidered with gold; short breeches of white velvet, embroidered with gold at the hips, and with buttons and buckles of diamonds in the shape of garters; the vest also was of white velvet, embroidered with gold and having diamond buttons; the coat was of crimson velvet, with facings of white velvet along all the seams above and around, and sparkling with gold; the half-mantle was also crimson, lined with white satin, and hanging over the left shoulder, while on the right shoulder and upon the breast it was fastened with a pair of diamond clasps. Sleeves of the most costly

* Constánt, "Mémoires," vol. iii., p. 111.

lace fell about the arms; the cravat was of Indian muslin, the collar likewise of lace; the cap, of black velvet, was adorned with two plumes and surrounded by a coronet of diamonds, which "the regent" used as a clasp. Such was the costume which the emperor wore in the procession from the Tuileries to Notre Dame. In the vestry of the cathedral he put on the ample state-robes, that is to say, the robe and mantle of emperor.*

The toilet of the empress was no less splendid and brilliant. It consisted of an elaborate robe with a long train; this robe was of silver brocade, with gold bees scattered all over; in front it was embroidered into a maze of gold-leaves; at the lower edge was a gold fringe; the shoulders alone were bare; long armlets of wrought gold, and adorned at the upper part with diamonds, enclosed the arm and covered one-half of the hand. It required all the art and grace of Josephine to carry this robe, it being without any waist, and, according to the fashion of the times, extremely narrow, and yet in wearing it to lose naught of her elegance or condescending dignity. At the upper part of the dress rose a collar *à la Medicis* of lace worked in with gold, and which Josephine had been constrained to wear, so as at least, through some historic details, to make her toilet correspond to the costume of the *renaissance* worn by Napoleon. A gold girdle, adorned with thirty-nine diamond rosettes, fastened under the breast her tunic-like dress. In her fondness for the antique, Josephine, instead of diamonds and pearls, had preferred for bracelets, ear-rings, and necklace, some choice stones of rare workmanship. Her beautiful thick hair was encircled and held together by a splendid diadem, a masterpiece of modern art. This toilet was to be completed, like that of Napoleon, before the solemn entrance into the cathedral, by putting on the imperial

* Constant, "Mémoires," vol. ii., p. 212.

mantle, which was fastened on the shoulders with gold buckles and diamond clasps.

At last the imperial toilets were completed; all the dignitaries, as well as the imperial family, gathered together in the throne-room, ready for the procession. Holding Josephine by the hand, her countenance expressing deep emotion, and her eye obscured by the tears shed as a price for the solemn marriage of that night, Napoleon appeared in the midst of his brilliant courtiers, and received the impressive, heart-felt wishes of his family, his brothers and sisters, who pressed around him and the empress, and who at this moment, forgetting all envy and jealousy, had only words of thankfulness and assurances of love, devotedness, and loyalty.

Napoleon replied to them all in the short, comprehensive words which he addressed to his brother Joseph, whilst with his flaming eyes he examined his brothers and sisters in the brilliant costumes of their dignity and glory:

"Joseph," said he, "could our father see us now!" *

From the pomp and solemnity of this important moment the thoughts of the emperor, for whom the pope was waiting in Notre Dame, wandered far away to the gloomy, quiet death-bed of his father, whose last hour was embittered by the tormenting thought of leaving his family unprotected and with but little means.

The thundering roar of cannon and the chimes of bells proclaimed that the emperor and empress, with their train, were now leaving the palace to ascend into the wonderful carriage made of gold and glass, and which was waiting for them at the Pavilion de l'Horloge to proceed toward the cathedral.

This carriage, prepared expressly for this day's celebration, was of enormous size and breadth, with windows on

* Meneval, "Souvenirs," vol. i., p. 204.

all sides, and entirely alike in its front and back seats. It therefore happened that their imperial majesties, on entering the carriage, not thinking of the direction to be taken, sat down on the front instead of the back seat.

The empress noticed the mistake, and when she laughingly called the emperor's attention to it, they both took the back seat without a suspicion that this little error was a bad omen.

Another little mishap occurred before they entered Notre Dame, which threw a gloom of sad forebodings and fear over the heart of the empress.

Whilst alighting out of the carriage, the empress, whose hand was occupied in the holding and carrying her robe and mantle, let slip from her fingers the imperial ring which the pope had brought her for a present, and which before the coronation he was to bless, according to the accustomed ceremonial, and then place it on her finger as a token of remembrance of the holy consecration. This made Josephine tremble, and her cheeks turned pale, especially as the ring could nowhere be found. It had rolled a considerable distance from the carriage, and only after some minutes did Eugene Beauharnais find it and bring it to his mother, to her great delight and satisfaction.*

At last the procession entered Notre Dame, and the brilliant solemnity began. It is not our purpose to describe here again the ceremony which has been in all its details portrayed in so many works, and to repeat the solemn addresses and the different events of this great and memorable day. It is with Josephine we have to do, and with what concerns her individual destiny—that alone claims our attentive consideration.

One event, however, is to be mentioned. At the moment the emperor took from the altar the so-called crown

* Aubenas, "Histoire de l'Impératrice Joséphine," vol. ii., p. 283.

of Charles the Great, and with firm hand placed it on his head—at the moment when he assumed the place of the ancient Kings of France, a small stone, which had detached itself from the cupola, fell down, touched his head, leaped on his shoulder, slipped down his imperial mantle, and rolled over the altar-steps near to the pope's throne, where it remained still until an Italian priest picked it up.*

At the moment of his loftiest grandeur the destiny of his future aimed its first stone at him, and marked him as the one upon whom its anger was to fall.

This was the third evil omen of the day; but fortunately Josephine had not noticed it. Her whole soul was absorbed in the sacred rites; and, after the emperor had crowned himself, her heart trembled with deep emotion and agitation, for now the moment had come when she was to take her part in the solemnity.

The Duchess d'Abrantes, who was quite near Josephine, and an immediate witness of the whole celebration, depicts the next scene in the following words: "The moment when the greatest number of eyes were fixed upon the altar-steps where the emperor stood, was when Josephine was crowned by him, and was solemnly consecrated Empress of the French. What a moment! . . . what a homage! What a proof of love manifested to her from him who so much loved her!

"David's painting, and many other pictures taken during the coronation, at the very spot and time, have well represented the empress at the feet of Napoleon, who crowns her; then the pope, the priests, and even persons who were four hundred miles away—as, for instance, the emperor's mother, who was then in Rome, but whom David nevertheless brings into his picture. But nothing, however, can give us a true description, or even an approximate idea, of

* Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. vii., p. 258.

this alike touching and lofty scene, where a great man by his own efforts ascends a throne, for on this occasion he was full of gratitude and emotion.

"When the moment had come for Josephine to take her part in the great drama, the empress rose from the throne and approached the altar, where the emperor was waiting for her; she was followed by the ladies of the palace and by her whole court, while the Princesses Caroline, Julie (the wife of Joseph), the Princess Elise, and Louis Bonaparte, carried the trail of her robe. One of the most admirable features in the beauty of the Empress Josephine was not her fine, graceful figure, but the bearing of her head—the gracious and noble manner in which she moved and walked. I have had the honor to be introduced to many 'real princesses,' as they are termed, in the *Faubourg St. Germain*, and I can in all sincerity say that I have never seen one who appeared to me so imposing as the Empress Josephine. In her, grace and majesty were blended. When she put on the grand imperial robes there was no woman whose appearance could be more royal in demeanor, and, in reality, none who understood the art of occupying a throne as well as she, though she never had been instructed in it.

"I read all that I have now said in the eyes of Napoleon. He watched with delight the empress as she moved toward him; and as she knelt before him, . . . as the tears she could not restrain streamed down her folded hands, which were lifted up to him more than to God, at that moment, when Napoleon, or, much more, when Bonaparte was for her the real and visible Providence, there passed over these two beings one of those fugitive minutes, unique in its kind, and never to be recalled in a whole life, and which fills to overflowing the void of many long years. The emperor performed with an unexcelled grace the most minute details of every part of the subsequent ceremony, especially when the moment came to crown the empress.

"This ceremony was to be performed by the emperor himself, who, after he had received the small closed crown surmounted by a cross, placed it first on his own head, and then afterward on the head of the empress. He performed these two movements with a most exquisite slowness, which was indeed admirable. But at the moment when he was to crown her who was for him, according to a prophecy, 'the star of happiness,' he made himself, if I dare use the expression, coquettish. He arranged this little crown which was to stand over her coronet of diamonds, and placed it on her head, then lifted it up to replace it in another way, as if to promise her that this crown would be light and pleasant to her." *

After this twofold crowning performed by Napoleon himself, the pope, surrounded by cardinals and prelates, approached the throne, and arriving upon the platform pronounced in a loud voice, spreading his hands over their imperial majesties, the ancient Latin formula of enthronization: "*In hoc solio confirme vos Deus, et in regno æterno secum regnare faciat Christus.*" (God establish you on this throne, and Christ make you reign with Him in His everlasting kingdom.) He then kissed the emperor on the cheeks, and turning himself to the audience, cried with a loud voice: "*Vivat imperator in æternum!*"

The immense cathedral resounded with one glad shout of thousands of voices: "Long live the emperor! long live the empress!"

Napoleon, calm and reserved, answered this acclamation with a friendly motion of the head. Josephine stood near him, pale, deeply moved, her eyes, full of tears, fixed on the emperor, as if she would pray to him, and not to God, for the prosperity and blessing of the future.

Meanwhile the pope had descended from his throne, and

* Abrantes, "Mémoires."

while he approached the altar, the bands played "Long live the emperor," which the Abbé Rose had composed for this solemnity. Then the pope, standing before the altar, intoned the *Te Deum*, which was at once executed by four choirs and two orchestras, and which completed the ecclesiastical part of the ceremony.

This was followed by a secular one. The emperor took, on the Bible which Cardinal Fesch presented to him, the oath prescribed in the constitution, and whereby he pledged himself solemnly to maintain "the most wise results of the revolution, to defend the integrity of the territory, and to rule only in the interest of the happiness and glory of the French people." After he had taken this oath, a herald approached the edge of the platform, and, according to ancient custom, cried out in a loud voice: "The most mighty and glorious Emperor Napoleon, Emperor of the French, is crowned and enthroned! Long live the emperor!"

A tremendous, prolonged shout of joy followed this proclamation: "Long live the emperor! Long live the empress!" and then an artillery salute thundered forth from behind the cathedral, and a similar salute responded from the Tuileries, and from the Invalides, and proclaimed to all Paris that France had again found a ruler, that a new dynasty had been lifted up above the French people.

At this moment from the *Place de Carrousel* ascended an enormous air balloon surmounted by an ornamental, gigantic crown, and which, on the wings of the wind, was to announce to France the same tidings proclaimed to Paris by bell and cannon: "The republic of France is converted into an empire! The free republicans are now the subjects of the Emperor Napoleon I.!"

The gigantic balloon arose amid the joyous shouts of the crowd, and soon disappeared from the gaze of the spectators. It flew, as a trophy of victory of Napoleon I., all over France. Thousands saw it and understood its silent

and yet eloquent meaning, but no one could tell where it had fallen. Finally, after many weeks, the emperor, who had often asked after the balloon's fate, received the wished-for answer. The balloon had fallen in Rome, upon Nero's grave!

Napoleon remained silent a moment at this news: a shadow passed over his countenance; then his brow brightened again, and he exclaimed: "Well, I would sooner see it there, than in the dust of the streets!"

CHAPTER XLI.

DAYS OF HAPPINESS.

THE prophecy of the old woman in Martinique had now been fulfilled: Josephine was more than a queen, she was an empress! She stood on life's summit, and a world lay at her feet. Before the husband who stood at her side, the princes and the people of Europe bowed in the dust, and paid him homage—the hero who by new victories had won ever-increasing fame and fresh laurels, who had defeated Austria, Prussia, and Russia, and who had engraven on the rolls of French glory the mighty victories of Austerlitz, Jena, and Eylau!

Josephine stood on the pinnacle of life; she saw the princes of foreign states come to France as conquered, as captives, and as allies, to bring to her husband and to herself the homage of subjects; she saw devoted courtiers and flatterers; pomp and splendor surrounded her on every side.

Amid this glory she remained simple and modest—she never gave up her cheerful gentleness and mildness; she never forgot the days which had been; she never allowed

herself to be exalted by the brilliancy of the moment to an ambitious pride or to a lofty self-conceit. The friends of the widow Josephine de Beauharnais always found in the empress Josephine a thankful, obliging friend, ever ready to appeal to her husband, and intercede with him in their behalf. To the royalists, when weary of their long exile, though poor and helpless still loyal to the royal family—when they returned to France with bleeding feet and wounded hearts, to implore from the Emperor of the French the privilege of dying in their native country—to them all Josephine was a counsellor, a helper, a compassionate protectress. With deep interest she inquired from them how it fared with the Count de Lille, whom her heart yet named as the King of France, though her lips dared not utter it. All the assistance she gave to the royalists, and the protection she afforded them, oftentimes despite Napoleon's anger, all the loyalty, the generosity, and self-denial she manifested, were the quiet sacrifice which she offered to God for her own happiness, and with which she sought to propitiate the revengeful spirit of the old monarchy, loitering perchance in the Tuileries, where she now, in the place of the wife of the Count de Lille, was enthroned as sovereign.

Josephine's heart was unwearied and inexhaustible in well-doing and in liberality; if Napoleon was truly the emperor and the father of the army and of the soldiers, Josephine was equally the empress and the mother of the poor and unfortunate.

But she was also, in the true sense of the word, the empress of the happy. No one understood so well as she did how to be the leader at festivals, to preside at a joyous company, to give new attractions by her gracious womanly sweetness and amiableness, or to receive homage with such beaming eyes, and to make others happy while she herself seemed to be made happy by them.

Amid this life full of splendor and grandeur there were

sad hours, when the sun was shadowed by clouds, and the eyes of the Empress of the French filled with such bitter tears as only the wife and the widow of General Beauharnais could shed.

Three things especially contributed to draw these tears from the eyes of the Empress Josephine: her jealousy, her extravagance, and, lastly, her childlessness.

Josephine was jealous, for she not only loved Napoleon, she worshipped him as her providence, her future, her happiness. Her heart was yet so full of passion, and so young, that it hoped for much happiness, and could not submit to that resignation which is satisfied to give more love than it receives, and instead of the warm, intoxicating cup of love, to receive the cool, sober beverage of friendship. Josephine wanted not merely to be the friend, but to remain Napoleon's beloved one; and she looked upon all these beautiful women who adorned the imperial court of the Tuileries as enemies who came to dispute with her the love of her husband.

And, alas! she had too often to acknowledge herself defeated in this struggle, to see her rivals triumph, and for weeks to retreat into the background before the victorious one who may have succeeded in enchaining the inconstant heart of Napoleon, and to make the proud Cæsar bow to her love. But afterward, when love's short dream had vanished, Napoleon, penitent, would come back with renewed love to his Josephine, whom he still called "the star of his happiness;" and oftentimes, touched by her tears, he sacrificed to her anxiety and jealousy a love-caprice, and became more affectionate, more agreeable even, than when he had forsaken her; for then, to prove to her how unreserved was his confidence, he often told her of his new love-adventures, and was even indiscreet enough at times to betray all his gallantries to her.

The second object of the constant solicitude and trials of

the empress was her extravagance. She did not understand how to economize; her indolent creole nature found it impossible to calculate, to bring numbers into columns, or to question tedious figures, to see if debt and purse agreed—if her generous heart must be prevented from giving to the poor—from rendering assistance to the helpless, or from spending handfuls for the suffering; to see if her taste for the arts was no longer to be gratified with pictures, paintings, statues, cameos, and other objects of *vertu*, which filled her with so much joy and admiration; if her elegant manners and fondness for finery and dress were to be denied all that was costly, all that was fashionable, and which seemed to have been expressly invented for the adorning of an empress. And when, in some of those grave, melancholy hours of internal anxiety, the cruel phantoms of the future reckonings arose before her and warned her to stop purchasing, Josephine comforted herself with the idea that it was Napoleon himself who had requested her to be to all the ladies of his court a pattern of elegance, and to be distinguished above all by the most brilliant, the choicest, the costliest toilet.

The emperor would often come into the cabinet of the empress, and to the great astonishment of her ladies-in-waiting would enter into the most minute details of her dress, and designate the robes and ornaments which he desired her to wear on some special festivity. It even happened in Aix-la-Chapelle that Napoleon, who had come into the toilet-room of the empress and found that she had put on a robe which did not please him, poured ink on the costly dress of silver brocade, so as to compel her to put on another.*

And then how was it possible to resist the temptation of purchasing all those beautiful things which were constantly

* Avrillon, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 98; and Constant, "Mémoires," vol. iii., p. 103.

brought to her for inspection? Josephine loved what was beautiful, tasteful, and artistic; all works of art which she admired must be purchased, whatever price was asked; and when the merchants came to offer to the empress their superb and splendid articles of luxury, how could she have the cruel courage to repel them? How often did she purchase objects of extraordinary value for which she had no need, simply to please herself and the merchant! Every thing that was beautiful and tasteful pleased her, and she must possess it. No one had a more remarkably fine taste than Josephine, but the artists, the manufacturers, the merchants, also had fine taste, and they came to the empress with the best they had; it was therefore natural that she should purchase from them. But unfortunately the happy moment of the purchase was followed by the unhappy one of the payment, and the outlay was constantly beyond the income of the empress, whose treasury, besides, was so often emptied in charities, pensions, and presents. Then when the merchants urged payment, and the purse was empty, Josephine had recourse to the emperor, and had to entreat him to meet her expenses, and then came violent scenes, reproaches, and bitter words. The emperor was angry, Josephine wept, and payment and reconciliation followed these scenes. Josephine promised to the emperor and to herself to be more economical in the future, and no longer to purchase what she could not pay for, but ever came the temptation, with all its inviting treasures, and being no saintly Anthony, she would fall a prey to the temptation.

The third and thickest cloud which often darkened the serene sky of her happiness after her marriage was, as already said, Josephine's childlessness. This was the bitter drop which was mixed in the golden cup of her joy—this was the sting which, however deeply hid under the roses, still reached her heart, and wounded it painfully. She had no children who could call Napoleon father, no offspring to

prolong the future of the new dynasty. And therefore the firmer the emperor's power became, the higher he stood above all other princes, the more distressing and the more anxious were the emotions which filled the heart of Josephine, the louder was the warning voice which ceased not to whisper to her heart, and which she forgot only now and then under the glow of Napoleon's assurances of love, or amid the noise of festivities. This voice whispered: "You must give place to another. Napoleon will reject you, to marry a wife of princely birth, who will give an heir to his empire!"

How Josephine strove to silence these agonizing whisperings of her heart! With what restlessness of sorrow she rushed into the gayeties and amusements of a court life! How she sought, in charitable occupations, in the joys of society, in every thing which was congruous to the life of a woman, of an empress, to obtain the forgetfulness of her torments! With what envious attention she listened to the whispers of courtiers, scrutinized their features, read their looks, to find out if they still believed in the existence of an empress in the wife of Napoleon! With what jealous solicitude she observed all the families on European thrones, and considered what princesses among them were marriageable, and whether Napoleon's relations with the fathers of such princesses were more intimate than those with the other princes!

And then she ever sought to deafen this vigilant, warning voice, by comforting herself with the thought that the emperor had adopted his brother's son, the son of Hortense, and that he had made him his heir, and consequently the throne and the dynasty were secure in a successor.

But alas! Fate would not leave this last comfort to the unfortunate empress. In May of the year 1807, Prince Napoleon, the crown prince of Holland, Napoleon's adopted son and successor, died of a child's disease, which in a few

days tore him away from the arms of his despairing mother.

Josephine's anguish was boundless, and in the first hours of this misfortune, which with such annihilating force fell upon her, the empress, as if in a state of hallucination, gazed into the future, and, with prophetic voice, exclaimed: "Now I am lost! Now is divorce certain!"

Yes, she was lost! She felt it, she knew it! Nothing the emperor did to pacify her anguish—the numerous expressions of his love, of his sympathy, of his winning affection—nothing could any longer deceive Josephine. The voices which had so long whispered in her breast now cried aloud: "You must give place to another! Napoleon will reject you, so as to have a son!"

But the emperor seemed still to try to dispel these fears, and, to give to his Josephine a new proof of his love and faithfulness, he chose Eugene de Beauharnais, the son of Josephine, for his adopted heir, and named him Vice-King of Italy, and gave him in marriage the daughter of the King of Bavaria; he thus afforded to Europe the proof that he still considered Josephine as his wife, and that he desired to be shown to her all the respect due to her dignity, for he travelled to Munich in company with her in order to be present at the nuptials.

This journey to attend her son's marriage was the last pleasure of Josephine—her last days of honors and happiness. Once more she saw herself surrounded by all the splendor and the pomp of her rank; once more she was publicly honored and admired as the wife of the first and greatest ruler of the world, the wife of the Emperor Napoleon.

Perhaps Josephine, in these hours of happiness, when as empress, wife, and mother, she enjoyed the purest and most sacred pleasure, forgot the sad forebodings and fears of her soul. Perhaps she now believed that, since Napoleon

had adopted her Eugene as his son, and had given to this son a wife of royal extraction, Fate would be propitious to her; that the emperor would be satisfied with the son of his choice, and that the future scions of the royal princess would be the heirs of his throne.

But one word of Napoleon frightened her out of this ephemeral security into which happiness had lulled her.

Josephine wept as she bade farewell to her son; she was comfortless when with his young wife Eugene left for Italy. She complained to Napoleon, in justification of her tears, that she should seldom see her son, that now he was lost to his mother's heart.

The emperor, who at first had endeavored to comfort her, felt at last wounded by her sorrow.

"You weep, Josephine," said he, hastily, "but you have no reasonable motives to do so; you weep simply because you are separated from your son. If already the absence of your children causes you so much sorrow, think then what I must endure! The tenderness which you feel for your children makes me cruelly experience how unhappy it is for me to have none." *

Josephine trembled, and her tears ceased flowing in the presence of the emperor, but only to fall more abundantly as soon as he had left her. Now she wept no longer at her separation from her son; her tears were still more bitter and painful—she grieved over the coming future; she wept because those voices which happiness for a moment had deafened, now spoke more loudly—more fearfully and menacingly shouted: "Napoleon will reject you! He will choose for himself a wife of royal birth, who will give an heir to his throne and his empire."

* Avrillon, "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine," vol. i., p. 202.

CHAPTER XLII.

DIVORCE.

It was at last decided! The storm which had so long and so fearfully rolled over Josephine's head was to burst, and with one single flash destroy her earthly happiness, her love, her future!

The peace of Vienna had been ratified on the 13th of October, 1809. Napoleon passed the three long months of peace negotiations in Vienna and in Schönbrunn, while Josephine, solitary and full of sad misgivings, lived quietly in the retreat of Malmaison.

Now that peace was signed, Napoleon returned to France with fresh laurels and new crowns of victory. But not, as usual after so long an absence, did he greet Josephine with the tenderness and joy of a home-returning husband. He approached her with clouded brow; with a proud, cold demeanor; with the mien of a ruling master, before whom all must bow, even his wife, even his own heart.

At Fontainebleau, whither the emperor in a few, short, commanding words—in a letter of three lines—had invited the empress, did the first interview of Josephine and Napoleon take place. She hastened to meet her husband with a cheerful face and beaming eyes. He, however, received her coldly, and endeavored to hide his feelings of uneasiness and shame under a repulsive, domineering manner.

He returned to his home victorious; the whole world lay conquered at his feet; he was triumphant. He had so deeply humiliated the pride of Austria that she not only accepted his harsh terms of peace, but, as once men had appeased the Minotaur by the sacrifice of the most amiable and most beautiful maiden, so Austria had asked in a low voice whether the daughter of the emperor, Maria Louisa,

might not give to the alliance of Austria and France the consecration of love. Napoleon eagerly entered into the scheme; and while Josephine, as his married wife before God and man, stood yet at his side, he already had begun negotiations, the object of which was to make the daughter of the Austrian emperor his wife, and before Napoleon returned to France those negotiations had been brought to a satisfactory result.

The ambitious Maria Louisa was to be the wife of the Emperor of the French. Nothing more was wanted but that Napoleon should reject his legitimate wife, whom the pope had anointed! He had but to disenthrone her who for fifteen years, with true and tender love, had shared his existence. He had only to be divorced publicly and solemnly, so as immediately to possess a bride, the daughter of an emperor!

Napoleon came to Fontainebleau to accomplish this cruel task, to break at once his marriage with Josephine and her heart. He knew what terrible sufferings he was preparing for her; he himself quailed under the anguish she was to endure; his heart was full of sorrow and woe, and yet his resolution was irrevocable. Policy had controlled his heart, ambition had conquered his love, and the man was determined to sacrifice his wife to the emperor.

Josephine felt this at the first word he addressed her, at the first look he gave her, after so long a separation, and her heart shrank within itself in bitter anguish, while a stream of tears started from her eyes.

But Napoleon asked not for the cause of these tears; he had not the courage to wage an open war with this brave, loving heart, and to subdue her love and despair with the two-edged sword of his state policy and craftiness. He did not wish to utter the word; he wanted to make her feel what an abyss was now open between them; all confidential and social intercourse was to be avoided, so that the empress

might become conscious that love and fellowship of hearts had ceased also.

On the evening after the first interview the empress found that the door of communication between her apartments and those of the emperor had been closed. Napoleon did not, as had been his wont, bid her good-night with a cordial and friendly kiss, but, in the presence of her ladies, he dismissed her with a cold salutation. The next day the emperor expressly avoided her society; and when at rare moments he was with her, he was so taciturn, so morose and cold, that the empress had not the courage to ask for an explanation, or to reproach him, but, trembling and afraid, she bowed under the iron pressure of his severe, angry looks.

To prevent their being with each other alone, and to avoid this horrible solitude, dreaded alike by Napoleon and Josephine, the emperor sent the next day for all the princes and princesses of his family to come to Fontainebleau. His sisters, no longer kept in control by the domineering will of the emperor, made Josephine feel their malice and enmity; they found pleasure in letting the empress see their own ascendency, their secure position, and in treating her with coldness and disrespect. The emperor, instead of guarding Josephine against these humiliations, had the cruel courage to increase them; for, without reserve or modesty, and in the very presence of Josephine, he offered the most familiar and positive attentions to two ladies of his court—ladies whom he honored with special favor.*

It was death-like agony which Josephine suffered in those days of Fontainebleau; it was a cruel martyrdom, which she, however, endured with all the gentleness of her nature, with the devotedness and uncomplaining anguish of true and genuine love.

* Thiers, "Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire," vol. xi., p. 323.

Napoleon could not endure this. The sight of this yet beloved pale face, with its sweet, angelic smile, lacerated his heart and tortured him with reproaches. He wanted to have festivities and amusements, so as not to witness this quiet, devoted anguish, so as not to read every day in the sorrowful, red eyes of Josephine, the story of nights passed in tears.

The court returned to Paris, there to celebrate the new victorious peace with brilliant feasts. Napoleon, so as to be delivered from the tearful companionship of Josephine, made the journey on horseback, and never once rode near her carriage.

In Paris had begun at once a series of festivities, at which German princes, the Kings of Saxony, of Bavaria, and of Würtemberg, were present, to congratulate Napoleon on his victories in Germany. The Empress Josephine, by virtue of her rank, had to appear at these receptions; she had, although in the deepest despondency, to wear a smile on her lip, to appear as empress at the side of the man who met her with coldness and estrangement, and whom she yet loved with the true love of a wife! She had to see the courtiers, with the keen instinct of their race, desert her, leaving around her person an insulting void and vacancy. Her heart was tortured with anguish and woe, and yet she could not uproot her love from it; she did not have the courage to speak the decisive word, and to desire the divorce which she knew hung over her, and which at any moment might agonize her heart!

Josephine did not possess the cowardice to commit suicide; she was ready to receive the fatal blow, but she could not plunge the dagger into her own heart.

Napoleon, unable to endure these tortures, longed to bring them to an end. He secretly made all the necessary arrangements, and communicated to the first chancellor, Cambacérès, his irrevocable resolution to be divorced from

the empress. He, however, notified him that he wanted this act of separation to be accomplished in the most respectful and honorable form for Josephine, and he therefore, with Cambacérès, prepared and decided upon all the details of this public divorce.

It only remained now to find some one who would announce to Josephine her fate, who would communicate to her the emperor's determination. Napoleon had not the courage to do it himself, and he wanted to confide this duty to the Vice-King Eugene, whom for this purpose he had invited to Paris.

But Eugene declined to become a messenger of evil tidings to his mother; and when Napoleon turned to Hortense, she refused to give to her mother's heart the mortal stroke. The emperor, deeply touched by the sorrow manifested by the children of Josephine, was not able to repress his tears. He wept with them over their blasted happiness —their betrayed love. But his tears could not make him swerve from his resolution.

"The nation has done so much for me," said he, "that I owe it the sacrifice of my dearest inclinations. The peace of France demands that I choose a new companion. Since, for many months, the empress has lived in the torments of uncertainty, and every thing is now ready for a new marriage, we must therefore come to a final explanation." *

But as none could be found to carry this fatal news to Josephine, Napoleon had to take upon himself the unwelcome task.

Wearied with the tears of the slighted empress, with the reproaches of his own conscience and with his own sufferings, Napoleon suddenly broke the sad, gloomy silence which had been so long maintained between him and his wife; in answer to her tears and reproaches, he told her that it was

* Lavalette, "Mémoires," vol. ii., p. 44.

full time now to arrive at a final conclusion; that he had resolved to form new ties; that the interest of the state demanded from them both an enormous sacrifice; that he reckoned on her courage and devotedness to consent to a divorce, to which he himself acceded only with the greatest reluctance.*

But Josephine did not hear the last words. At the word divorce she swooned with a death-like shriek; and Napoleon, alarmed at the sight of her insensibility, called out to the officers in waiting to help him to carry the empress into her rooms upon her bed.

Such hours of despair, of bitter pain, of writhing, agonized love did Josephine now endure! How courageous, yet how difficult, the struggle against the wretchedness of a rejected love! How angrily and scornfully she would rise up against her cruel fate! How lovingly, humbly, gently she would acquiesce in it, as to a long-expected, inevitable fatality!

These were long days of pain and distress; but Josephine was not alone in her sufferings, for the emperor's heart was also touched with her quiet endurance, and her deep agony at this separation.

At last the empress came out victorious from these conflicts of heart and soul, and she repressed her tears with the firm will of a noble, loving woman! She bade her son Eugene announce to the emperor that she assented to the divorce on two conditions: first, that her own offspring should not be exiled or rejected, but that they should still remain Napoleon's adopted children, and maintain their rank and position at his court; secondly, that she should be allowed to remain in France, and, if possible, in the vicinity of Paris, so that, as she said with a sweet smile, she might be near the emperor, and still hope in the pleasure of seeing him.

* Thiers, "Histoire du Consulat," vol. xi., p. 340.

Napoleon's countenance manifested violent agitation when Eugene communicated to him his mother's conditions; for a long time he paced the room to and fro, his hands behind his back, and unable to gather strength enough to return an answer. Then, with a trembling voice, he said that he not only granted all these conditions, but that they corresponded entirely with the wishes of his heart, and that he would add to them a third condition, namely, that Josephine should still be honored and treated by him and by the world as empress, and that she should still be surrounded with all the honors belonging to that rank.

There was yet wanting, for the full offering of the sacrifice, the public and solemn act of divorcement; but before that could take place it was necessary to make the requisite preparations, to arrange the future household of the divorced empress, and to prepare every thing for Josephine's reception in Malmaison, whither she desired to retire from the world. The mournful solemnity was put off until the 15th of December, and until then Josephine, according to the rules of etiquette, was to appear before the world as the ruling empress, the wife of Napoleon. Twice it was necessary to perform the painful duty of appearing publicly in all the pomp of her imperial dignity, and to wear the heavy burden of that crown which already had fallen from her head. On the morning of the 3d of December she had to be present at the chanting of the Te Deum in Notre Dame, in thanksgiving for the peace of Vienna, and to appear at the ball which the city of Paris that same evening gave to the emperor and empress.

This ball was the last festivity which Josephine attended as empress, but even then she received not all the honors which were due to her as such. Napoleon himself had given orders that the ladies of Paris, gathered in the Hôtel de Ville, with the wife of the governor of the capital, and the Duchess d'Abrantes at their head, should not, as usual,

meet the empress at the foot of the stairs, but that they should quietly await her approach in the throne-room, while the marshal of ceremonies would alone accompany her up the stairs.

The Duchess d'Abrantes, deeply affected by this order of the emperor, which at once revealed the sad secret of the approaching future, had reluctantly to submit to this arrangement, which so cruelly broke the established etiquette. She has herself, in her memoirs, given full particulars of this evening, and her words are so touching and so full of sentiment that we cannot refuse to make them known here:

"We, therefore," says she,* "ascended the throne-room, and were no sooner seated, than the drums began to beat, and the empress entered. I shall never forget that figure, in the costume which so marvellously suited her . . . never will this gentle face, now wrapped in mourning crape, fade away from my memory. It was evident that she was not prepared for the solitude which she had found on the grand staircase; and yet Junot, in spite of the risk of being blamed by the emperor, went to receive her, and he had even managed that the empress should meet on the stairs a few ladies who, it is true, did not very well know how they came and what they had to do there. The empress, however, was not deceived; as she entered the grand hall and approached the throne on which, in the presence of the public of the capital, she was to sit probably for the last time . . . . her feet trembled and her eyes filled with tears. . . . . I tried to catch her eyes; I would willingly have sunk at her feet and told her how much I suffered. . . . She understood me, and looked at me with the most agonizing gaze which perhaps was ever in her eyes since that now blighted crown had been placed on her head. That look

* Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. xii., p. 289.

spoke of agony—it revealed depths of sorrow! . . . . What must she have suffered on this awful day! . . . . She felt wretched, dying, and yet she smiled! Oh, what a torture was that crown! . . . . Junot stood by her.

"'You were not afraid of Jupiter's wrath,' said I to him afterward.

"'No,' said he, with a gloomy look, 'no, I fear him not, when he is wrong. . . .'

"The drums beat a second time; they announced the emperor's approach. . . . A few minutes after he came in, walking rapidly, and accompanied by the Queen of Naples and the King of Westphalia. The heat was extraordinary, though it was cold out of doors. The Queen of Naples, whose gracious, charming smile seemed to demand from the Parisians the salutation, 'Welcome to Paris,' spoke to every one, and with the expression of uncommon goodness. Napoleon, also, who wished to appear friendly, walked up and down the room, talking and questioning, followed by Berthier, who fairly skipped at his side, fulfilling more the duties of a chamberlain than those of a *connétable.* A trifling circumstance in reference to Berthier struck me. The emperor, who for some time had been seated on his arm-chair near the empress, descended the steps of the throne to go once more around the hall; at the moment he rose I saw him bend down toward the empress, probably to tell her that she was to accompany him. He rose up first; Berthier, who had stood behind him, rushed on to follow his master; the empress was already standing up, when his feet caught in the train of her mantle, and he nearly fell down, causing the empress almost to fall. However, he disentangled himself, and, without one word of excuse to the empress, he followed the emperor. Certainly Berthier had not the intention to be wanting in respect to the empress; but he knew the secret—he knew the whole drama soon to be performed, ... and assuredly he would not have so

acted one year ago as he did to-day. . . . . The empress had remained standing with a marvellous dignity; she smiled as if the accident was the result of mere awkwardness . . . . but her eyes were full of tears, and her lips trembled. . . ."

At last the 15th of December had come; the day on which Josephine was to endure the most cruel agony of her life, the day on which she was solemnly to descend from the throne and bid farewell to her whole brilliant past, and commence a despised, lonely, gloomy future.

In the large cabinet of ceremonies were gathered on this day, at noon, the emperor, the Empress Josephine, the emperor's mother, the King and Queen of Holland, the King and Queen of Westphalia, the King and Queen of Naples, the Vice-king Eugene, the Princess Pauline Borghese, the high-chancellor Cambacérès, and the secretary of civil affairs, St. Jean d'Angely. Josephine was pale and trembling; her children were agitated, and hiding their tears under an appearance of quietude, so as to instil courage into their mother.

Napoleon, standing upright, his hand in that of the empress, read with tremulous voice:

"My cousin, prince state-chancellor, I have dispatched you an order to summon you hither into my cabinet for the purpose of communicating to you the resolution which I and the empress, my much-beloved wife, have taken. I am rejoiced that the kings, queens, and princesses, my brothers and sisters, my brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, my daughter-in-law and my son-in-law, who also is my adopted son, as well as my mother, are here present to hear what I have to say.

"The policy of my empire, the interest and wants of my people, direct all my actions, and now demand that I should leave children heirs of the love I have for my people, and heirs of this throne to which Providence has exalted me.

However, for many years past, I have lost the hope of having children through the marriage of my beloved wife, the Empress Josephine; and this obliges me to sacrifice the sweetest inclinations of my heart, so as to consult only the welfare of the state, and for that cause to desire the dissolution of my marriage.

"Already advanced to my fortieth year, I still may hope to live long enough to bring up in my sentiments and thoughts the children whom it may please Providence to give me. God knows how much this resolution has cost my heart; but there is no sacrifice too great for my courage if it can be shown to me that such a sacrifice is necessary to the welfare of France.

"It is necessary for me to add that, far from having any cause of complaint, I have, contrariwise, but to praise the devotedness and affection of my much-beloved wife; she has embellished fifteen years of my life; the remembrance of these years will therefore ever remain engraven on my heart. She has been crowned at my hands; it is my will that she retain the rank and title of empress, and especially that she never doubt my sentiments, and that she ever hold me as her best and dearest friend."

When he came to the words "she has embellished fifteen years of my life," tears started to Napoleon's eyes, and, with a voice trembling through emotion, he read the concluding words.

It was now Josephine's turn. She began to read the paper which had been prepared for her:

"With the permission of our mighty and dear husband, I must declare that, whereas I can no longer cherish the hope of having children to meet the wants of his policy and the wants of France, I am ready to give the highest proof of affection and devotedness which was ever given upon earth. . . ."

Josephine could proceed no further; sobs choked her

voice. She tried to continue, but her trembling lips could no more utter a word. She handed to Count St. Jean d'Angely the paper, who, with tremulous voice, read as follows:

"I have obtained every thing from his goodness; his hand has crowned me, and on the exaltation of this throne I have received only proofs of the sympathy and love of the French people.

"I believe it is but manifesting my gratitude for these sentiments when I consent to the dissolution of a marriage which is an obstacle to the welfare of France, since it deprives her of the happiness of being one day ruled by the posterity of a great man, whom Providence has so manifestly favored, as through him to bring to an end the horrors of a terrible revolution, and to re-establish the altar, the throne, and social order. The dissolution of my marriage will not, however, alter the sentiments of my heart; the emperor will always find in me his most devoted friend. I know how much this action, made incumbent upon him by policy and by the great interests in view, has troubled his heart; but we, the one and the other, are proud of the sacrifice which we offer to the welfare of our country."

When he had finished, Napoleon, visibly affected, embraced Josephine, took her hand, and led her back to her apartments, where he soon left her insensible in the arms of her children.*

Napoleon himself, sad and silent, returned to his cabinet, where, in a state of complete exhaustion, he fell into an easy-chair.

On the evening of the same day he again visited Josephine, to pass a few hours with her in quiet, undisturbed communion; to speak in tenderness and love of the future, to weep with her, and, full of deepest emotion and sincerity,

* Thiers, "Histoire du Consulat," etc., vol. xi., p. 349.

to assure her of his undying gratitude for the past, and of his abiding friendship for the future.

Josephine passed the night in tears, struggling with her heart, sometimes breaking into bitter complaints and reproaches, which she immediately repressed with that gentleness and mildness so much her own, and with that love which never for a moment departed from her breast.

There remained yet to perform the last, the most painful scene of this great, tearful drama. Josephine had to leave the Tuileries; she had forever to retire from the place which she so long had occupied at her husband's side; she had to descend into the open grave of her mournful abandonment; as a widow, to part with the corpse of her love and of the past, and to put on mourning apparel for a husband who was not yet dead, but who only rejected her to give his hand and his heart to another woman.

The next day at two o'clock, the moment had come for Josephine to leave the Tuileries, to make room for the yet unknown wife of the future. Napoleon wanted to leave Paris at the same moment, and pass a few days of quiet and solitude in Trianon.

The carriages of the emperor and empress were both ready; the last farewell of husband and wife, now to part forever, had yet to be said. M. de Meneval, who was the sole witness of those sad moments, gives of them a most affecting description, which bears upon its face the merit of truth and impartiality.

"When it was announced to the emperor that the carriage was ready, he stood up, took his hat, and said: 'Meneval, come with me.'

"I followed him through the narrow winding stairs which led from his room into that of the empress. She was alone, and seemed absorbed in the saddest thoughts. At the noise we made in entering she rose up and eagerly threw herself, sobbing, upon the neck of the emperor, who drew

her to his breast and embraced her several times; but Josephine, overcome by excitement, had fainted. I hastened to ring for assistance. The emperor, to avoid the renewal of a painful scene, which it was not in his power to prevent, placed the empress in my arms as soon as he perceived her senses return, and ordered me not to leave her, and then he hurried away through the halls of the first story, at whose gate his carriage was waiting. Josephine became immediately conscious of the emperor's absence; her tears and sobs redoubled. Her women, who had now entered, laid her on a sofa, and busied themselves with tender solicitude to bring her relief. In her bewilderment she had seized my hands, and urgently entreated me to tell the emperor not to forget her, and to assure him of her devotedness, which would outlast every trial. I had to promise her that at my arrival in Trianon I would wait upon the emperor and see that he would write to her. It caused her pain to see me leave, as if my departure tore away the last bond which united her to the emperor. I left her, deeply affected by so true a sorrow and by so sincere a devotion. During the whole journey I was deeply moved, and could not but bewail the merciless political considerations which tore violently apart the bonds of so faithful an affection for the sake of contracting a new union, which, after all, contained but uncertain chances.

"In Trianon I told the emperor all that had happened since his departure, and I conveyed to him the message intrusted to me by the empress. The emperor was still suffering from the emotions caused by this farewell scene. He spoke warmly of Josephine's qualities, of the depth and sincerity of the sentiments she cherished for him; he looked upon her as a devoted friend, and, in fact, he has ever maintained for her a heart-felt affection. The very same evening he sent her a letter to console her in her solitude. When he learned that she was sad and wept much, he wrote to her

again, complained tenderly of her want of courage, and told her how deeply this troubled him." *

It is true Josephine's sorrow was bitter, and the first night of solitude in Malmaison was especially distressing and horrible. But even in these hours of painful struggle the empress maintained her gentleness and mildness of character. Mademoiselle d'Avrillon, one of the ladies in waiting, has given her testimony to that effect:

"I was with the empress during the greater part of the night," writes she; "sleep was impossible, and time passed away in conversation. The empress was moved to the very depth of her heart; it is true, she complained of her fate, but in expressions so gentle, in so resigned a manner, that tears would come to her eyes. There was no bitterness in her words, not even during this first night when the blow which destroyed her, had fallen upon her; she spoke of the emperor with the same love, with the same respect, as she had always done. Her grief was most acute: she suffered as a wife, as a mother, and with all the wounded sensitiveness of a woman, but she endured her affliction with courage, and remained unchanged in gentleness, love, and goodness." †

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE DIVORCED.

JOSEPHINE had accepted her fate, and, descending from the imperial throne whose ornament she had long been, retired into the solitude and quietness of private life.

* Meneval, "Napoléon et Marie Louise.—Souvenirs Historiques," vol. i., pp. 230–232.

† Avrillon, "Mémoires," vol. ii., p. 166.

But the love and admiration of the French nation followed the empress to Malmaison, where she had retreated from the world, and where the regard and friendship, if not the love of Napoleon himself, endeavored to alleviate the sufferings of her solitude. During the first days after her divorce, the road from Paris to Malmaison presented as animated a scene of equipages as in days gone by, when the emperor resided there with his wife. All those whose position justified it, hastened to Malmaison to pay their respects to Josephine, and through the expressions of their sympathy to soften the asperities of her sorrow. Doubtless many came also through curiosity, to observe how the empress, once so much honored, endured the humiliation of her present situation. Others, believing they would exhibit their devotedness to the emperor if they should follow their master's example, abandoned the empress, as he had done, and took no further notice of her.

But the emperor soon undeceived the latter, manifesting his dissatisfaction by his cold demeanor and repelling indifference toward them, whilst he loudly praised all those who had exercised their gratitude by visiting Malmaison, and in expressing their devotedness to the empress.

He himself went beyond his whole court in showing attention and respect to Josephine. The very next day after their separation, the emperor went to Malmaison to visit her, and to take with her a long walk through the park. During the following days he came again, and once invited her and the ladies of her new court to a dinner in Trianon.

Josephine might have imagined that nothing had been altered in her situation, and that she was still Napoleon's wife. But there were wanting in their intercourse those little, inexpressible shades of confidence which her exquisite tact and her instinctive feelings felt yet more deeply than the more important and visible changes.

When Napoleon came or went, he no longer embraced her, but merely pressed her hand in a friendly manner, and often called her "madame" and "you;" he was more formal, more polite to her than he had ever been before.

And then his daily visits ceased; in their place came his letters, it is true, but they were only the letters of a friend, who tried to comfort her in her misfortune, but took no sympathetic interest in her distress.

Soon these letters became more rare, and when they did come they were shorter. The emperor had to busy himself with other matters than with the solitary, rejected woman in Malmaison; he had now to occupy his thoughts with his young and beautiful bride—with Maria Louisa, the daughter of the Emperor of Austria, who was soon to enter Paris as the wife of Napoleon, the Emperor of France.

Bitter and painful indeed were those first days of resignation for Josephine; harsh and unsparing were the conflicts she had to fight with her own heart, before its wounds could be closed, and its pains and its humiliations cease to torment her!

But Josephine had a brave heart, a strong will, and a resolute determination to control herself. She conquered herself into rest and resignation; she did not wish that the emperor, the happy bridegroom, should ever hear of her red, weeping eyes, of her lamentations and sighs; she did not wish that, in the golden cup which the husband of the emperor's young daughter was drinking in the full joyousness of a conqueror, her tears should commingle therein as drops of gall.

She controlled herself so far as to be able with smiling calmness to have related to her how Paris was celebrating the new marriage festivities, how the new Empress of the French was everywhere received with enthusiasm. She was even able to inquire, with an expression of friendly sym-

pathy, after Maria Louisa, the young wife of sixteen, who had taken the place of the woman of forty-eight, and from whom Josephine, in the sincerity of her love, required but one thing, namely, to make Napoleon happy.

When she was told that Napoleon loved Maria Louisa with all the passion of a fiery lover, Josephine conquered herself so as to smile and thank God that she had accepted her sacrifice and thus secured Napoleon's happiness.

But the emperor, however much he might be enamored of his young wife, never forgot the bride of the past, the beloved one of his youth, of whom he had been not only captivated, but whom he had loved from the very depths of his soul. He surrounded her, though from a distance, with attentions and tokens of affection; he would often write to her; and at times, when his heart was burdened and full of cares, he would come to Malmaison, and visit this woman who understood how to read in his face the thoughts of his heart, this woman whose soft, gracious, and amiable disposition—even as a tranquillizing and invigorating breeze after a sultry day—could quiet his excited soul; to this woman he came for refreshment, for a little repose, and sweet communion.

It is true those visits of the emperor to his divorced wife were made secretly and privately, for his second wife was jealous of the affection which Napoleon still retained for Josephine; she listened with gloomy attention to the descriptions which were made to her of the amiableness, of the unwithered beauty of Josephine; and one day, after hearing that the emperor had visited her in Malmaison, Maria Louisa broke out into tears, and complained bitterly of this mortification caused by her husband.

Napoleon had to spare this jealous disposition of his young wife, for Maria Louisa was now in that situation which France and its emperor had expected and hoped from this marriage; she was approaching the time when the ob-

ject for which Napoleon had married her was to be accomplished, when she was to give to France and the Bonaparte dynasty a legitimate heir. It was necessary, therefore, to be cautious with the young empress, and, on account of her interesting situation, it was expedient to avoid the gloomy sulkiness of jealousy.

By the emperor's orders, and under pain of the punishment of his wrath, no one dared speak to Maria Louisa of the divorced empress, and Napoleon avoided designedly to give her an occasion of complaint. He went no longer to Malmaison; he even ceased corresponding with his former wife.

Only once during this period he had not been able to resist the longing of visiting Josephine, who, as he had heard, was sick. The emperor, accompanied only by one horseman, rode from Trianon to Malmaison. At the back gate of the garden he dismounted from his horse, and, without being announced, walked through the park to the castle. No one had seen him, and he was about passing from the front-room into the cabinet of the empress by a side-door, when the folding-doors leading from this front-room into the cabinet opened, and Spontini walked out.

Napoleon, agitated and vexed at having been surprised, advanced with imperious mien toward the renowned *maestro*, who was quietly approaching him.

"What are you doing here, sir?" cried Napoleon, with choleric impatience.

Spontini, however, returned the emperor's haughty look, and, measuring him with a deep, flaming glance, asked, with a lofty assurance: "Sire, what are you doing here?"

The emperor answered not—a terrible glance fell upon the bold *maestro*, without, however, annihilating him: then Napoleon entered into Josephine's cabinet, and Spontini walked away slowly and with uplifted head.

Spontini, the famous composer of the "Vestals," whose

score he had dedicated to the Empress Josephine, remained after her divorce a true and devoted admirer of the empress; and in Malmaison, as well as in the castle of Navarra, he showed himself as faithful, as ready to serve, as submissive, as he had once been in the Tuileries, or at St. Cloud, in the days of Josephine's glory. He often passed whole weeks in Navarra, and even undertook to teach the ladies and gentlemen of the court the choruses of the "Vestals," which the empress so much liked.

Josephine had, therefore, for the renowned *maestro* a heart-felt friendship, and she took pleasure in boasting of the gratitude and loyalty of Spontini, in contrast with the sad experiences she had made of man's ingratitude.*

The emperor, as already said, avoided to trouble his young wife by exciting her jealousy; and though he did not visit Malmaison, though for a time he did not write to Josephine, yet he was acquainted with the most minute details of her life, and with all the little events of her home; and he took care that around her every thing was done according to the strictest rules of etiquette, and that she was surrounded by the same splendor and the same ceremonies as when she was empress.

At last the moment had come which was to give to Josephine her most sacred and glorious reward. The cannon of the Invalides, with their one hundred and one thunders, announced that Maria Louisa had given birth to a son, and Prince Eugene was the first who brought this news to his mother in Navarra.

Josephine's countenance beamed with satisfaction and joy when she learned from the lips of her son this news of the birth of the King of Rome; she called her whole court together to communicate herself this news to the ladies and gentlemen, and to have them listen to the descriptions which

* "Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine," par Mlle. Ducrest," vol. i., p. 287.

Eugene, with all heartiness, was making of the scenes which had taken place in the imperial family circle during the mysterious hours of suspense and expectation.

But when Eugene repeated the words of Napoleon's message which he sent through him to Josephine, her countenance was illumined with joy and satisfaction, and tears started from her eyes—tears of purest joy, of most sacred love!

Napoleon had said: "Eugene, go to your mother; tell her that I am convinced no one will be more pleased with my happiness than she. I would have written to her, but I should have had to give up the pleasure of gazing at my son. I part from him only to attend to inexorable duties. But this evening I will accomplish the most agreeable of all duties—I will write to Josephine." *

The emperor kept his word. The same evening there came to Malmaison an imperial page, with an autograph letter from Napoleon to Josephine. The empress rewarded this messenger of glad tidings with a costly diamond-pin, and then she called her ladies together, to show them the letter which had brought so much happiness to her heart, and which also had obscured her eyes with tears.

It was an autograph letter of Napoleon; it contained six or eight lines, written with a rapid hand; the pen, too hastily filled, had dropped large blots of ink on the paper. In these lines Napoleon announced to Josephine the birth of the King of Rome, and concluded with these words: "This child, in concert with our Eugene, will secure the happiness of France, and mine also."

These last words were to Josephine full of delight. "Is it, then, possible," exclaimed she, joyously, "to be more amiable and more tender, thus to sweeten what this moment might have of bitterness if I did not love the emperor so

* Ducrest, vol. i., p. 236.

much? To place my son alongside of his is an act worthy of the man who, when he will, can be the most enchanting of men." *

And this child, for which so much suffering had been endured, for which she had offered her own life in sacrifice, was by Josephine loved even as if it were her own. She was always asking news from the little King of Rome, and no deeper joy could be brought to her heart than to speak to her of the amiableness, the beauty, the liveliness of this little prince, who appeared to her as the visible reward of the sacrifice which she had made to God and to the emperor.

One intense, craving wish did Josephine cherish during all these years—she longed to see Napoleon's son; she longed to press to her heart this child who was making her former husband so happy, and on which rested all the hopes of France.

Finally Napoleon granted her desire. Privately, and in all secrecy, for Maria Louisa's jealousy was ever on the watch, and she would never have consented to allow her son to go to her rival; without pomp, without suite, the emperor took a drive with the little three-year-old King of Rome to the pleasure-castle of Bagatelle, whither he had invited the Empress Josephine through his trusty chamberlain Constant.

Josephine herself has described her interview with the little King of Rome in a very touching and affecting letter which she addressed the next day to the emperor, and which contains full and interesting details of the brief interview she had with the son of Maria Louisa. We cannot, therefore, abridge this letter, nor deny ourselves the pleasure of transcribing it:

"Sire, although deeply moved by our interview of yesterday, and preoccupied with the beautiful and lovely child

* Ducrest, vol. i., p. 238.

you brought me, penetrated with gratitude for the step taken by you for my sake, and whose unpleasant consequences, I may well imagine, could fall only upon you; I felt the most pressing desire to converse with you, to assure you of my joy, which was too great to be at once exhibited in a suitable manner. You, who to meet my wishes exposed yourself to the danger of having your peace disturbed, will fully understand why I thus long to acknowledge to you all the happiness your inestimable favor has produced within me.

"Truly, it was not out of mere curiosity that I wished to see the King of Rome; his face was not unknown to me, for I had seen striking portraits of him. Sire, I wanted to examine the expression of his features, listen to the tone of his voice, which is so much like yours; I wanted to see you —how you would caress the child, and then I longed also to return to him the caresses which my son Eugene received from you. If I recall to your remembrance how dear my son was once to you, it is that you should not be surprised at the partiality which I cherish for the son of another, for it is your son, and you will find neither insincerity nor exaggeration in feelings which you fully appreciate, since you yourself have nurtured similar ones.

"The moment I saw you enter with the little Napoleon in your hand was undoubtedly one of the happiest of my eventful life. That moment surpassed all the preceding ones, for never have I received from you a stronger proof of your affection to me. It was no passionate love which induced you to fulfil my wishes, but it was a sincere esteem and affection, and these feelings are unchangeable, and this thought completes my happiness.

"It was not without trembling that I thought of the dissolution of our marriage-ties, for it was reasonable for me to apprehend that a young, beautiful wife, endowed also with the most enviable gifts, would soon make you for-

get one who lacks all these advantages, and who then would be far away from you. When I called to mind all the amiable qualities possessed by Maria Louisa, I could not but tremble at the thought that I should soon be indifferent to you, but surely I was then ignoring the loftiness and generosity of your soul, which still preserves the memory of its extraordinary devotedness, and of its tenderness toward me, a devotedness and tenderness whose superabundance was proportioned to those eminent qualities which have surprised Europe, and which cause you to be admired by all those who come near you, and which even constrain your enemies to render you justice!

"Yes, I acknowledge to you, sire, you have once more found the means of astonishing me, and to fill me with admiration, accustomed as I am to admire you; and your whole conduct, so well suited to my position, the solicitude with which you surround me, and finally the step you took yesterday in my behalf, prove to me that you have far surpassed all the favorable and charming impressions which I have ever cherished for you.

"With what fondness I pressed the young prince to my heart! How his face, radiant with health, filled me with delight, and how happy I was to see him so amused and so contented as he watched us both! In fact, I entirely forgot I was a stranger to this child; I forgot that I was not his mother while partaking his sweet caresses. I then envied no man's happiness; mine seemed far above all bliss granted to poor mortals here below. And when the time came to part from him, when I had to tear myself from this little being whom I had barely learned to know, I felt in me a deep anguish, as deep as if all the sorrows of humanity had pierced me through.

"Have you, as I did, closely noticed the little commanding tone of your son when he made known to me his wish that he wanted me to be in the Tuileries with him? And

then his little pouting mien when I answered that this could not be?

"'Why,' exclaimed he, in his own way, 'why, since papa and I wish it?'

"Yes, this already reveals that he will understand how to command, and I heartily rejoice to discern traits of character which, in a private individual, might be pregnant with evil consequences, but which are becoming to a prince who is destined to rule in a time that is so near a long and terrible revolution. For after the downfall of all order, such as we have outlived, a sovereign cannot hope to maintain peace in his kingdom merely through mildness and goodness. The nation over which he rules, and which yet stands on the hot soil of a volcano, must have the assurance that crime no sooner lifts its head than swift punishment will reach it. As you yourself have told me a thousand times: 'When once fear has been instilled, one must not by arbitrariness, but through strict impartiality, strive to be loved.'

"You have often used your privilege of granting pardon, but you have more frequently proved that you would not tolerate a violation of the laws enacted by you. Thus you have subdued and mastered the Jacobins, quieted the royalists, and satisfied the party of moderation. Your son will now have your example before him, and, happier than you, will be able to go further in manifesting clemency toward the guilty.

"I had with him a conversation which establishes the deep sensitiveness of his heart.

"He was delighted with my *charivari*, and then he said to me:

"'Ah, how beautiful that is! but if it were given to a poor man he would be rich, would he not, madame?'

"'Certainly he would,' I replied.

"'Well, then,' said he, 'I have seen in the woods a poor

man; allow me to send for him. I have no money myself, and he needs a good coat.'

"'The emperor,' I replied, 'will find a pleasure in gratifying your wishes. Why does not your imperial highness ask him for his purse?'

"'I have asked him already, madame. He gave it to me when we left Paris, and we have given all away. But as you look so good, I thought you would do what was so natural.'

"I promised to be useful to that poor man, and I will certainly keep my word. I have given orders to my courier to find the unfortunate person, and bring him to-morrow to Malmaison, where we will see what can be done for him. For it will indeed be sweet for me to perform a good work counselled by a child three years old. Tell him, I pray you, sire, that this poor man is no longer poor!

"I have thought you would be pleased to gather these details from a conversation which passed between us in a low voice, while you were busy at the other end of the drawing-room, examining an atlas. You will also perceive by this, how fortunate it is for the King of Rome to have a governess, who knows how to inspire him with such feelings of compassion, the more touching that they are seldom found in princes. For princes in general have been accustomed to a constant flattery, which induces them to imagine that every thing in the world is for them, and that they can entirely dismiss the duty of thinking about others. In fact the eminent qualities of Madame de Montesquiou make her worthy of the important and responsible charge you have committed to her care, and the sentiments of the prince justify the choice you have made. Will he not be good and benevolent, who is brought up by goodness and benevolence themselves?

"I am, however, afraid that his imperial highness, not-

withstanding the orders made to him by you, has spoken of this interview, which was to remain secret. I recommended him not to open his mouth, and I assured him that if any one knew that he had come to Bagatelle it would be impossible for him to come here again.

"'Oh, then, madame,' replied he, 'be not alarmed, I will say nothing, for I love you; promise me, however, if I am obedient, to come soon and visit me.'

"Ah! I assured him, that I desired this more than he did himself, and I have never spoken more truly.

"Meanwhile, I am conscious that those interviews, which fill me with extreme joy, cannot often be repeated, and I must not abuse your goodness toward me by claiming your presence too often. The sacrifice which I make to your mental quietude is another proof of my intense desire to render you happy. This thought will comfort me while waiting to be able to embrace my adopted son. Do you not find this exchange of children very sweet? As regards myself, sire, what distresses me is, that I can only give to your son this name, without being able to be useful to him! And, again, how different is my position from that which you held toward Eugene! The longer, the kinder you are to him, the less can I show you my gratitude! However, I rely upon the vice-king that he will be a comfort to you, amid the sorrows which your family causes you. If, unfortunately, what you surmise about the King of Naples were to happen, then Eugene would become still more useful to you than ever, and I dare trust he would prove worthy of you by his conduct in war as well as by his sincere devotedness to your service.

"You have now received quite a long letter from me! The sentiment of delight in talking about our two sons has carried me away, and this sentiment will make me excusable for having so long intruded upon you. As sorrow needs concentration, so joy needs expansion. This, sire, explains

this letter, long as a volume, and which I cannot close without once more expressing my deepest gratitude.

"JOSEPHINE." *

CHAPTER XLIV.

DEATH.

HAPPY the man to whom it is granted to close a beautiful and worthy life with a beautiful and worthy death! Happy Josephine, for whom it was not reserved like the rest of the Bonapartes to wander about Europe seeking for a refuge where they might hide themselves from the persecutions and hatred of the princes and people! To her alone, of all the Napoleonic race, was reserved the enviable fate to die under the ruins of the imperial throne, whose fragments fell so heavily upon her heart as to break it.

For France the days of fear had come, for Napoleon the days of vengeance. The nations of Europe had at last risen with the strength of the lion that breaks his chains and is determined to obtain liberty by devouring those who deprived him of it, and so those irritated nations had with the power of their wrath forced their princes, who had been so obediently submissive to Napoleon, to declare war and to fight against him for life or death.

The conflicts, battles, and endless victories of the constantly defeated Austrians, Prussians, Russians, and English, belong to history—this everlasting tribunal where the deeds of men are judged, and where they are written on its pages to be for ages to come as lessons and examples of warning and encouragement.

Josephine, the lonely and rejected one, had nothing to

* Ducrest, "Mémoires," vol. iii., p. 294.

do with those fearful events which shook France; she played no active part in the great drama which was performed before the walls of Paris, and which closed with the fall of the hero whom she had so warmly and so truly loved.

Josephine, during those days of horror and of decisive conflicts, was in her pleasure-castle of Navarra. Her daughter, Queen Hortense, with her two sons, Napoleon Louis and Louis Napoleon, was with her. There she learned the treachery of the marshals, the capitulation of Marmont, the surrender of Paris, and the entrance of the foreign foe into the capital of France.

But where was Napoleon? Where was the emperor? Did Josephine know anything of him? Why did he not come to the rescue of his capital, and drive the foe away?

Such were the questions which afflicted Josephine's heart, and to which the news, finally re-echoed through Paris, gave her the fearful response.

Napoleon had come too late, and when he had arrived in Fontainebleau with the remnants of the army defeated by Blucher, he learned there that Marmont had capitulated, and that the allies had already entered Paris, and all was lost.

The deputies of the senate and Napoleon's faithless marshals came from Paris to Fontainebleau to require from him that he should resign his crown, and that he should save France by the sacrifice of himself and his imperial dignity. These men, lately the most humble, devoted courtiers and flatterers of Napoleon, who owed to him everything—name, position, fortune, and rank—had now the courage to approach him with lofty demeanor and to request of him to depart into exile.

Napoleon, overcome by all this misfortune and treachery which fell upon him, did what they required of him. He abdicated in favor of his son, and left Paris, left France, to go to the small island of Elba, there to dream of the days

which had been and of the days which were coming, when he would regain his glory and his emperor's crown.

Amid the agonies, cares, and humiliations of his present situation, Napoleon thought of the woman whom he had once named the "angel of his happiness," and who he well knew would readily and gladly be the angel of his misfortune. Before leaving Fontainebleau to retire to the island of Elba, Napoleon wrote to Josephine a farewell letter, telling her of the fate reserved for him, and assuring her of his never-ending friendship and affection. He sent this letter to the castle of Navarra by M. de Maussion, and the messenger of evil tidings arrived there in the middle of the night.

Josephine had given orders that she should be awakened as soon as any one brought news for her. She immediately arose from her bed, threw a mantle over her shoulders, and bade M. de Maussion come in.

"Does the emperor live?" cried she, as he approached. "Only answer me this: does the emperor live?"

Then, when she had received this assurance, after reading Napoleon's letter, and learning all the sad, humiliating news, pale, and trembling in all her limbs, she hastened to her daughter Hortense.

"Ah, Hortense," exclaimed she, overcome and falling into an arm-chair near her daughter's bed, "ah, Hortense, the unfortunate Napoleon! They are sending him to the island of Elba! Now he is unhappy, abandoned, and I am not near him! Were I not his wife I would go to him and exile myself with him! Oh, why cannot I be with him?" *

But she dared not! Napoleon, knowing her heart and her love, had commissioned the Duke de Bassano expressly to tell the Empress Josephine to make no attempt to follow him, and "to respect the rights of another."

* Mlle. Cochelet, "Mémoires," vol. ii.

This other, however, had not been pleased to claim the right which Josephine was to respect. Napoleon left Fontainebleau on the 21st of April, 1814, to go to the island of Elba. It was his wish to meet there his wife and his son. But Maria Louisa did not come; she did not obey her husband's call; she descended from the imperial throne, and was satisfied to be again an archduchess of Austria, and to see the little King of Rome dispossessed of country, rank, father, and even name. The poor little Napoleon was now called Frank—he was but the son of the Archduchess Maria Louisa; he dared not ask for his father, and yet memory ever and ever re-echoed through his heart the sounds of other days; this memory caused the death of the Duke de Reichstadt, the son of Napoleon.

Napoleon had gone to Elba, and there he waited in vain for Maria Louisa, to fill whose place Josephine would have gladly poured her heart's blood.

But she dared not! she submitted faithfully and devotedly to Napoleon's will. To her he was, though banished, humiliated, and conquered, still the emperor and the sovereign; and her tearful eyes gazed toward the solitary island which to her would have been a paradise could she but have lived there by the side of her Napoleon!

But she had to remain in France; she had sacred duties to perform; she had to save out of the wreck of the empire at least something for her children! For herself she wanted nothing, she desired nothing; but the future of her children had to be secured.

Therefore, Josephine gathered all her courage; she pressed her hands on the mortal wounds of her heart, and kept it still alive, for it must not yet bleed to death; her children yet claimed her care.

Josephine, therefore, left the castle of Navarra for that of Malmaison, thus fulfilling the wishes of the Emperor Alexander, who desired to know Josephine's wishes in refer-

ence to herself and to her children, and who sincerely wished to become acquainted with her, that he might offer her his homage, and transfer to her the friendship he once cherished for Napoleon.

Josephine received in Malmaison the first visit of Alexander, and from this time he came every day, to the great grief of the returned Bourbons, who felt bitterly hurt at the homage thus publicly offered before all the world by the conqueror of Napoleon to the divorced Empress Josephine, who, in the eyes of the proud Bourbons, was but the widow of General de Beauharnais.

Notwithstanding this, the rest of the princes of the victorious allies followed the example of Alexander. They all came to Malmaison to visit the Empress Josephine; so that again, as in the days of her imperial glory, she received at her residence the conquerors of Europe, and saw around her emperors and kings. The Emperor Alexander, with his brothers; the King Frederick William, with his sons; the Duke of Coburg, and many others of the little German princes, were guests at her table, and endeavored, through the respect they manifested to her, and the expressions of their esteem and devotedness, to turn away from her the sad fate which had come upon all the Bonapartes.

But her heart was mortally wounded. "I cannot overcome the fearful sadness which has seized me," said she to Mlle. Cochelet, the friend of her daughter Hortense; "I do all I can to hide my cares from my children, but I suffer only the more." *

"You will see," said she to the Duchess d'Abrantes, who had visited her at Malmaison, "you will see that Napoleon's misfortune will cause my death. My heart is broken—it will not be healed." †

She was right, her heart was broken, it would not be

* Mlle. Cochelet. "Mémoires," vol. ii.
† Abrantes, "Mémoires," vol. xvii.

healed! It seemed at first but merely an indisposition which seized the empress, and which obliged her to decline the announced visit of the Emperor Alexander, nothing but a slight inflammation of the neck, accompanied by a little fever. But the disease increased hour after hour. On the 27th of May, Josephine was obliged to keep her bed; on the 29th her sufferings in the neck were so serious that she nearly suffocated, and her fever had become so intense that she had but few moments of consciousness. In her fancy she often called aloud for Napoleon, and the last word which her dying lips uttered was his name.

Josephine died on the 29th of May, 1814. That love which had illumined her life occasioned her death, and will sanctify her name for ever as with a saintly halo.

She was buried on the 2d of June in the church at Rueil. It was a solemn funeral procession, to which all the kings and princes assembled in Paris sent their substitutes in their carriages; but the most beautiful mourning procession which followed her to the grave were the tears, the sighs of the poor, the suffering of the unfortunate, for all whom Josephine had been a benefactress, a good angel, and who lost in her a comforter, a mother.

In the church of Rueil, Eugene and Hortense erected a monument to their mother; and when in 1837 Queen Hortense, the mother of the Emperor Napoleon III., died at Arenenberg, her corpse was, according to her last wishes, brought to Rueil and laid at her mother's side. Her son erected there a monument to her; and this son, the grandchild of Josephine, is now the Emperor of the French, Napoleon III.

Josephine's sacrifice has been in vain. Napoleon's dynasty, for whose sake she sacrificed happiness, love, and a crown, has not been perpetuated through the woman to whom Josephine was sacrificed—not through Maria Louisa, who gave to France and to the emperor a son, but through

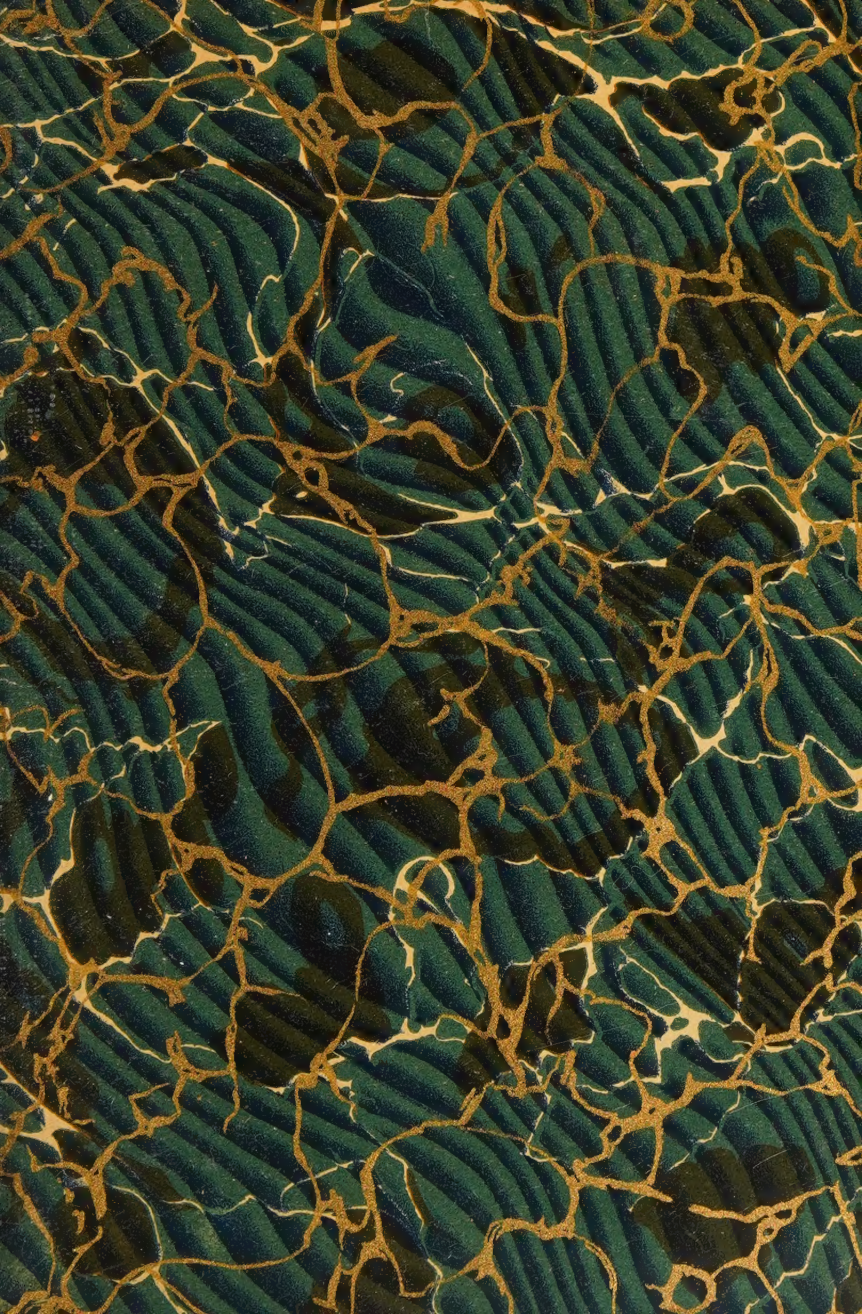
the daughter of Josephine, who gave to Napoleon more than a son, her love, her heart, and her life!

Providence is just! Upon the throne from which the childless empress was rejected, sits now the grandchild of Josephine, and his very existence demonstrates how vain are all man's calculations and desires, and how like withered leaves they are carried away and tossed about by the breath of destiny!

It was not the emperor's daughter who perpetuated Napoleon's dynasty, but the widow of General Beauharnais, Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie.

Josephine, therefore, is avenged in history; she was also avenged in Napoleon's heart, for he bitterly lamented that he had ever been separated from her. "I ought not to have allowed myself to be separated from Josephine," said he, a short time before his death in St. Helena, "no, I ought not to have been divorced from her; that was my misfortune!"

THE END



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